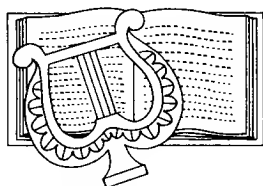


FIERY CROSS



BY W. STEPHENS HAYWARD.

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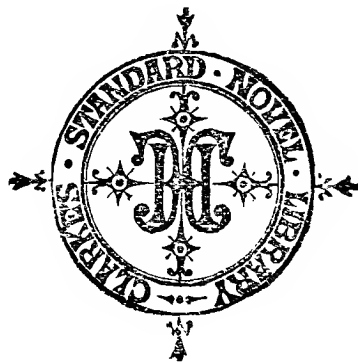


THE
FIERY CROSS:

A TALE OF
THE GREAT AMERICAN WAR.

BY
W. STEPHENS HAYWARD,

AUTHOR OF
"BLACK ANGEL"—"STAR OF THE SOUTH"—"FIERY CROSS"—"REBEL
PRIVATEER"—"LOVE'S TREASON"—"RODNEY RAY"—"TOM HOLT'S
LOG"—"LORD SCATTERBRAIN"—"WILD AND WONDERFUL"—
"LOVE AND ADVENTURE"—"DEMONS OF THE SEA"—
"CLOUD KING"—"MUTINY OF THE THUNDER"—
ETC., ETC., ETC.



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FLEET STREET.

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THE FIERY CROSS:

A TALE OF

THE GREAT AMERICAN WAR.

CHAPTER I.

THE SLAVE GIRL'S WARNING.

"At the midnight hour took forth from the eastern balcony, towards Gum Tree Hill; a beacon light will beam forth on the night, a solitary bright speck in the darkness. One by one, on every eminence for miles around, there will flash out answering lights; then all will be dark again. Make good speed, use well that interval; your life, the life of yourself and of all the haughty Southern gentlemen, your guests—the honour of your sister, and of every white woman for miles around, will be the guerdon for which you must strain every nerve. Arm yourselves, barricade your houses, and leave in charge of trusty friends. Then arm, and saddle your horses, and be prepared. Scan well the horizon, and when on the gloom of night there shall blaze forth a Fiery Cross, mount and away! The hour has come; ride for your lives; drive deep the spurs in your horses' flanks; for if your enemies are first at the unknown rendezvous all is lost. Sisters, mothers, wives, little ones, and old men, all shall be engulfed in one common ruin. Rapine and murder, arson and outrage, shall sweep the fair face of the land. Men wrought up to a pitch of frenzy, maddened by wrongs and oppressions, stirred up by designing men—demons in human form—shall make the sky ruddy with the glare of your burning houses; the earth red with the blood of your families; the night air hideous with the shrieks of outraged white women. All these horrors shall take place if you neglect this warning, and pay no heed to the midnight signal--The Fiery Cross.

"A FRIEND."

THE FIERY CROSS.

musical was the merry jest, the buzz of conversation, as Hubert Glynne, eldest son of John Stewart Glynne, one of the wealthiest of the Louisiana planters, read this mysterious missive. Although he read it to himself first, his guests and friends saw by his face that it was of deep import. Twice he read it through; and then, pale as death, he raised his eyes to the bearer. Before him, with meekly folded hands and cast-down eyes, stood a young girl of great beauty. There was not the slightest possible brown tinge in her complexion; the least possible wave in her glossy tresses, which floated in luxurious profusion over her shoulders and down her back, betrayed the fatal taint of African blood.

Nevertheless this girl, a very Venus in beauty and grace, was a slave.

Deadly pale—as pale even as her young master—she might have been taken for a beautiful statue, but for the heaving of her bosom and a slight tremor about her mouth

“Lola!”

At the sound of his voice she started, raised her eyes, and instantly the blood rushed to her face and neck. Then again the flush faded away, and in low, tremulous tones, she answered:

“Yes, master.”

“Do you know the contents of this note?”

“I do. I read it.”

“Whence came it?”

She hesitated, as though uncertain what to say.

Every eye was upon her, and she cowered and trembled visibly under the concentrated gaze of so many.

“Where did you get this note? Who gave it to you? Speak, girl.”

“A man. He placed it in my hand. ‘Read, and deliver to your master,’ he said. Then he ran swiftly away and disappeared in the darkness.”

“A man? What man? Did you know him?”

“No.”

“A white man?”

“I don’t know.”

Hubert Glynne looked sternly on her.

“Lola,” he said, “no more of this foolery. Say all you

know without reserve, or I shall think you are speaking falsely, telling me lies."

This seemed to break down the girl's fortitude and self-control. Her bosom heaved convulsively for a moment or two; then she burst into tears, and, falling on her knees, cried passionately:

"No, young master, it is not a lie, but true; a dreadful truth; neglect it not. Oh! for heaven's sake believe me. I swear, here on my knees—I swear, by the great God above, the God alike of the white man and the slave—I swear that it is a true warning, and that such scenes of horror as this land has never seen shall, if you heed it not, follow the beacon light on the hill—The Fiery Cross."

"You may go now, Lola," said Hubert Glynne; "this is a very extraordinary missive you have brought; your words and manner are no less so."

The girl glided away, all eyes following her retreating figure, till she disappeared from view.

"Gentlemen, fill your glasses," said the host, Hubert Glynne, rising, "and, pray, make yourselves at home during my absence, which will not be longer than a few minutes."

"There was something more than common in that letter the girl brought him," said Captain Evans, of South Louisiana, to his next neighbour, "I never saw a fellow look so astonished and dazed as did Hubert Glynne."

"What in the name of thunder is the meaning of it? What is the Fiery Cross of which she spoke; and what has that to do with 'scenes of horror such as this land has never seen?'"

A dark, handsome young man, in a cavalry uniform of grey and silver, here spoke:

"Ah! bah! It's just nothing at all. Some fool or other has taken it into his head to have a joke with Glynne, and frighten him."

"I am sure the girl was not joking," said another; "there could be no possibility of mistaking the true, earnest, vehement manner in which she implored him not to neglect the warning."

While the subject is being discussed, and the *sangaree* and wine passing freely around, we will devote a few words to the scene and the persons there assembled.

A large room on the first floor of a spacious and handsome building, having on two sides a balcony running around. There were no windows on these two sides—merely large blinds, which on occasions were let down, but were now rolled up, so as to leave the room entirely open to the soft night breeze.

The room faced to the north and east. From the northern balcony could be seen the estate—the cotton fields and clearings—and at some half mile distant the station or village where the field hands lived.

The eastern balcony commanded a view of a less cultivated country—swamp and forest predominating. About four miles off there might be observed a hill of nearly circular shape. It was densely covered, up to near its summit, by ash, maple, and pine trees, while all around the base was a thick scrub or undergrowth. The top, however, was quite bare, with the exception of one huge tree, from which it derived its name of Gum Tree Hill.

The building was called Valverde House and the plantations the Valverde estate. It was the joint property of Hubert Glynne—his two brothers being on service—and his sister Maude, a beautiful girl of eighteen, to whom Lola, the slave girl, was handmaiden.

There were about two hundred slaves on the estate, which was one of the most fertile and profitable in all Louisiana.

The party of gentlemen to whom we have introduced our readers were all Southerners, many of them in the service of the young Confederacy—others waiting to obtain commissions. Among those was Hubert Glynne, who, tired of a comparatively inactive life, had determined to join the army, and strike a blow for the "Stars and Bars," as the new Confederate flag was called. Some were in uniform, but the great majority were in *mufti*.

The slave girl's warning seemed soon to be forgotten, and the discussion now turned on the events of the war, the first year of which had ended gloriously for the Southern armies.

At Manassas, Carthage, Oak Hill, and Leesburg the Confederates had achieved signal victories, while the news had but lately arrived of another desperate battle, the

most bloody struggle and victory yet achieved by the Confederates.

It is the beginning of April, 1862, and at this time the Federal expedition, consisting of forty-six vessels, carrying two hundred and eighty-six guns and twenty-one mortars, was at the mouth of the Mississippi, preparatory to ascending that river, in order to capture the great town of New Orleans, the commercial capital of the South. But though this formidable array of vessels of war was backed by a large number of transports carrying troops, under the command of the infamous Benjamin Butler, no alarm was felt by the authorities for the safety of the city.

New Orleans was pronounced impregnable; and it was confidently believed that even if the enemy should succeed in passing the two great works, Forts Jackson and Philip, one on each bank of the river, about sixty miles below the city, the capture of this latter would still be impossible.

Large sums had been expended to line the banks of the river with batteries, and in the harbour were twelve gun-boats, an iron-clad steamer, and the famous ram *Manassas*.

At the time of which we speak, the enemy's fleet were slowly making their way up the river. It was not thought, however, that they would dare to endeavour to pass the forts, backed as they were by formidable obstructions; and the gradual approach of the enemy was looked on with contempt and scorn by the high-spirited, haughty Southerners.

We have said that all the company assembled around the hospitable-table of Hubert Glynne were Southerners: this requires some qualification. There was one there present, a Northerner by birth, but who, by long residence, and the supposed interest he had in the State, was regarded as staunch to the Confederate cause.

This man's name was Varley Fang; and as he will have much to do with our story, we will devote a short space to introducing him to the reader.

He was the junior partner in the firm of Vane, Moncrieff, and Fang, large merchants of New York and New Orleans. The senior partner, Mr. Moncrieff, of Boston, had long since retired with a colossal fortune, and the business now devolved entirely on Benjamin Vane, of New York, and

Varley Fang, who had the entire management of the New Orleans branch of the firm.

A middle-aged man, of about thirty to thirty-five years of age, apparently, was Varley Fang, with straight sandy hair, small pointed beard and moustache, and lozenge-shaped grey eyes, which appeared to be half closed. His mouth was wide, lips thin, nose long and slightly aquiline. Had it not have been for a singular, almost undefinable expression, he might have passed as tolerably good-looking. But, though he took the utmost pains to look always pleasant and amiable, this expression caused every one with whom he came in contact to regard him with suspicion and dislike—at least, always at first, for Varley spared no pains in ingratiating himself with all those whom he wished to please. He had an habitual stoop, and carried his head low, with the face prominent, which added to the cunning and avaricious expression of his features.

As partner in a wealthy firm, Varley Fang was reputed wealthy. Besides his share in the profits of the business he had private property—several houses in Magazine Street, New Orleans. He had also an estate and plantations about seven miles from Kenner's plantations, and seventeen from the city. This last fact alone was thought to stamp his allegiance to the Confederacy; and, notwithstanding the unfavourable impression he always made at first, he continued, as a rule, to ingratiate himself with the gentlemen of New Orleans and the vicinity, and, if not liked, was at all events tolerated.

He resided, when in New Orleans, in a fine mansion in Jackson Square; and when he could get away from his city business, he stayed on his plantation, called Mulcaster Estate. Here he lived in the most luxurious style. A thorough sensualist, denying himself nothing which wealth could purchase, he gave himself up to every possible indulgence. He was continually purchasing handsome female slaves, and at the time of which we speak had gathered around him quite a harem of dark beauties, varying in colour from dark brown to light yellow.

So notorious was he in this respect, that no ladies would visit him; and he even had great difficulty, despite of his

influence and reputed wealth, in gaining admission to decent female society.

But this was not the only vice which Varley Fang possessed. He was an inveterate gambler, as well as debauchee, and no one but himself knew the extent of his losses in one character, or his offences, and even crimes, in the other.

But among the men this was no serious objection. Society in the Southern States was curiously constituted; and what would be looked on as a heinous offence in puritanical New England, was regarded in Louisiana as a very venial fault. Perhaps the explanation of this state of affairs "down South" may be found in the very nature of the "peculiar institution," slavery, which gave to the dominant race absolute power over the persons of the slaves.

However, with this we have nothing to do. Slavery is undoubtedly a great evil in itself. The question is whether the wrongs of involuntary servitude would be mitigated by suddenly liberating and turning loose on the world a class of beings accustomed all their lives to dependence—incapable of acting or even thinking for themselves.

Varley Fang had not long been acquainted with the brothers Glynne. He had just been introduced to them through the medium of the youngest of the three brothers—Launcelot Glynne—whom he had met in New York, some five months previously, on one of his business visits to that city.

Varley Fang had sufficient interest with both the Federal and Confederate governments to obtain a pass to proceed North or South, as he pleased. With great cunning, he affected friendship for the cause of each in turn, and loudly deplored the damage which the war did to legitimate commerce. This latter might have been partly true at the commencement, but at the time of which we speak, when the war had been raging for a year, this astute gentleman began to see his way to a vast fortune by trading on the misfortunes of his country.

On his last visit to New York he had been enabled to render a trifling service to Launcelot Glynne, a young man of two-and-twenty, who held a commission in the United

States' navy. Since the breaking out of the war, however, he had declined active service, not choosing to take arms against his native state of Louisiana, which early enrolled itself among the seceders from the Union. His brothers and friends in the South had repeatedly written to him, urging him to leave the metropolis of the Federals, come South, and take up arms for the Confederacy. Hitherto, however, Launcelot had neglected to do so. A powerful object of attraction had fixed him in New York; nor could he tear himself away, in spite of his sympathy for the cause of his compatriots, and his own martial ardour and ambition.

Varley Fang sat at the head of the table, next to Hubert Glynne, and while the slave girl stood before her master he never removed his eyes from her. His ardent licentious gaze swept her beautiful person from head to foot, and followed her till she vanished from sight. There was a wild fire in his eye—a determined look on his face—which rightly reflected his determination to possess himself of this splendid specimen of female loveliness. For a time, however, he said nothing, and remained silent amidst the noise and laughter and loud talk which soon succeeded the singular episode of the slave girl's warning.

CHAPTER II.

THE SLAVE GIRL AND HER BROTHER.

LET us follow the movements of the slave girl, Dolora Velasco, for a space, and leave the party of gentlemen, guests of Hubert Glynne, to carouse and make merry to the top of their bent. When she left the presence of the company after delivering her message, she passed out, and crossing the railed-in court-yard, at the rear of the house, made her way towards the huts where the field labourers lived. These were arranged in a straight street, some two hundred yards in length, each hut with a little plot of ground behind.

A deep silence reigned in the negro village. Apparently

all were asleep, or—what seemed more probable—absent; for it was past nine o'clock, and the light-hearted niggers were wont, as a rule, to beguile the time with banjo and songs till a far later hour. Presently, the girl stopped outside a hut, and lifting the mat which served for a door, entered.

A young man—a mulatto, but very little Jarker than herself—started to his feet from a low stool on which he was seated by the embers of a fire. He had an old cutlass across his knees, which he appeared to have been polishing or sharpening. A large pistol, and a small hatchet or tomahawk, lay on the ground beside him.

"Oh! it's you, Lola," he said, reseating himself when he saw who it was. "What do you want this time of night? Don't you see I'm busy?—got a heap to do—reckon here'll be snakes waked before morning."

"What do I want! What are you doing? What are you about to do?" she replied.

"Don't you see! Polishing up this old sword," he said, suiting the action to the word.

"Brother Sebastian, do you mean to go there to-night?"

"There! Where do you mean?"

"You know as well as I. I am speaking of Gum Tree Hill."

An oath escaped from the young mulatto.

"Gum Tree Hill! Who told you anything about it?"

"What matters who told me? I know—and I have come to warn you."

"What do you know? Who has told you? Come—answer for yourself," he cried; and as he spoke he started to his feet, and let the cutlass fall rattling to the ground.

"I know that you have embarked in a desperate, a bloody, a wicked enterprise," she said, earnestly. "I know that you are bent on murder and outrage; and that though this night blood may flow like water, yet it will be all in vain, and will but serve to rivet tighter the chains which bind you, and me, and all of us—unhappy slaves that we are!"

"Well, it appears that you know something of this besides. Be good enough to tell me how much you know."

"I know that there is a midnight rendezvous on Gum

Tree Hill, and that you, and hundreds of others, design to revolt—to murder all the whites—to burn the houses—to devastate the plantations; and then, hoisting the black flag, to assemble all slaves who will join under your banner, to organize them as an army marching through the country, carrying fire and sword, and proclaiming death to the whites; to make common cause with the Yankees——”

“And why not? Are they not our friends? And are not the Southerners our tyrants, our oppressors, our bitter and relentless foes, who would keep us for ever in this accursed bondage?”

“That they are our tyrants I will not deny. God knows how bitterly I feel the humiliating brand which makes me hate myself, and divests me in my own opinion of all self-respect, even of my womanhood—for I shall not dare call myself a woman, unhappy wretch that I am—a chattel—an animal—the despised *Dolora*, the property of Hubert Glynne!”

“Ha! ha!” growled Sebastian, under his breath; “you’ll not be his property to-morrow morning—for he shall be the property of the worms and maggots, the vultures, jackals, alligators, anything that chooses to eat his accursed carcass.”

“No! no! no!” the girl shrieked; “it shall not be—he shall not be killed. What has he done that you should wish to murder him?”

“What has he done? Did he not strip me, and order me to be flogged?”

“But you were insolent, and called him a liar. Then did he not, at my intercession, spare you?”

“Yes, as he would spare a hound. He dismissed me with a kick.”

“He has been always a kind master. Did he not come to see you when you had that fever, and himself give you medicine?”

“So he would his horse, or any other property. I tell you, *Lola*, he must die; and if I had my will, so should every accursed slave-owner on this Continent.”

“He shall not die!” she exclaimed passionately. “I will——”

“Ha!”

Her brother's gleaming eyes and fierce look warned her to be careful what she said.

"Brother, I tell you that this projected revolt is both wicked and useless. What though the oppressed slaves outnumber the whites as ten to one!—the masters are well-armed, brave, resolute, and with the indomitable energy of a conquering race—the negroes, though capable of being raised at times to a pitch of wild frenzy, cannot be depended upon. They would be intoxicated by a first success, and would fall an easy prey to the first organized force brought against them. Then, when defeated and powerless, what a terrible vengeance would not the stern masters inflict! Sebastian, believe me this can end in nothing but disaster. Even your secret cannot be kept. I, whom you thought ignorant, know the time and place. What surety have you that those against whom you fight do not also know?"

At that moment there was wafted on the night air the sound of a merry song. It came from the house.

"That is my surety," he replied. "Hark! how the fools laugh—drinking and making merry, little thinking of the pit which yawns beneath their feet."

"Sebastian, I ask you again—give up this dreadful project. Can you not wait? The hour of our freedom is approaching. Let the issue of this be what it may, slavery, at least, will perish. If the Yankees triumph, they are pledged to free the slaves; if they fail, and the Union is rent in twain, slavery will fall under its ruins."

"I cannot wait—I will not wait. I have been struck and flogged—to my dying day I can never efface from my body the marks of the accursed lash, any more than I can from my mind the misery that I, a man, am a slave!"

"Sebastian," cried the girl, clasping her hands, and looking imploringly once more. "I pray and entreat of you to think better of this."

"Lola, it is in vain. This night I will exact vengeance for the blows I have suffered—the lash—the contumely—the forced labour—every indignity which these proud whites have put upon me—a man, and their equal; equal—ay, their superior; for is not my name Sebastian Velasco, and do I not come of noble parentage?"

"Alas, Sebastian! what are we, to talk thus? We are slaves, and as such let us endure our hard fate until it shall please Heaven to strike off our fetters; let us not seek to compass our freedom by murder."

"Freedom! yes—I will have freedom; there is music in the word; but not freedom alone. I will have freedom for the future and vengeance for the past."

"At least promise that our master and his household shall come to no harm."

"Promise—ha! ha!—that they shall come to no harm. A likely thing, indeed! I'll promise that if I have the chance, my knife shall taste his heart's blood; this wealthy, proud, contemptuous Hubert Glynne, who dare dismiss me with a kick—me, Sebastian Velasco."

There was a something startling in the air of assumption with which this was said, contrasting in a ludicrous manner with the position, belongings, and common cotton attire of the slave.

"Sebastian," the girl went on, "I tell you no harm shall happen to Hubert Glynne or his sister Maude—I, Dolores Velasco have said it." The girl's manner was quite as decided—her tone as proud as her brother's.

"Oh, indeed, Miss Lola! So you have said it, have you? And how are you going to protect these people, our tyrants?"

"No matter, they shall not be murdered in cold blood?"

The young man, starting to his feet, seized the girl roughly by the arm. "Lola, you would not betray us? You dare not——"

"I dare anything."

"Beware how you attempt such a thing. Lola, we have sworn to visit with instant death any one who may be suspected of treason to the cause."

"There can be no treason where there is no participation. I have nothing to do with this plot, and am free to act as I choose."

"You will betray us?"

"I did not say so, Sebastian," she replied, gently; "though to do so would, I believe, save you from crime and misery."

"Swear that you will not betray us, Lola, or——by

"God, I will kill you with my own hands, recreant slave that you are!"

"Strike," she said, drawing close to him, and throwing back her shoulders so as to give him a fair opportunity to stab her to the heart did he so choose—"strike, I fear you not!"

"You are a strange girl, Lola," he said, sullenly. "At times none so bitter in inveighing against our degraded wretched state than you, and yet when we would strike a blow for our freedom, and with our own hands burst asunder the fetters from our limbs, and at the same time avenge ourselves on our accursed tyrants, you whine and beg for mercy for those who have deserved none at our hands."

"I will not countenance murder, but will do all that lies in my power to prevent it. Now again, Sebastian, I ask you to forego your dread purpose and use your influence with the others, who, more ignorant, less intellectual, and more like animals, can be led or driven anywhere, until their blood shall have risen and their wild-beast natures have opportunity to break out; then, nothing but wholesale massacre can appease or conquer them."

"Once again, Lola, I will not draw back. I care nothing for my life; but so sure as the moon shines in heaven I will have *vengeance*, if I fail in achieving *liberty*, this night."

"Then on your head be it."

"Where are you going?" he asked, as she turned to leave him.

"First to the house, then to the secret rendezvous in the swamp."

"What will you do there?"

"Endeavour to dissuade these unhappy wretches who this night purpose to imbrue their hands in blood, and themselves reap a terrible retribution."

"What can it avail? At midnight, the beacon light will be seen far and wide, and from all the plantations for miles around those in the plot will flash around it."

"I will use what eloquence I possess—pray of them not to allow the beacon to be lighted. The hill is but a mile from the swamp, and a swift runner could, in a very few minutes, carry the news that for the present the plot was abandoned."

"They will not listen to you."

"I will try."

"They will turn on you, and perhaps kill you as a traitress to the cause."

"Let them—I can die!"

There was something proudly defiant in the girl's air, tone, and manner. Her noble figure was drawn up to its full height, her breast heaved proudly, her nostrils dilated, and her dark eyes flashed fire, as she gave utterance to this noble sentiment.

"She will not betray us!" muttered Sebastian. "I think I know her too well to suspect her of that. She will endeavour to dissuade them, and fail. Ha! ha! the idea of dissuading Hyæna Jones, our ringleader—as well talk of dissuading the foul beast, from which he takes his name, from the carrion!"

CHAPTER III.

THE RENDEZVOUS.

DOLORA VELASCO, on leaving her brother, went straight to the house; and as she was about entering the large room or hall at the basement, where the house servants waited when not wanted to attend on their masters and mistresses, who invariably occupied the upper part of the house alone, she met in the doorway a man, from whom she instinctively drew back.

"Ah! my pretty Lola," he said, putting his hand familiarly on her shoulder, "and how goes it, my black-eyed beauty? I think you'll find a big buck nigger yet to take compassion on your lonely state. A jolly life you yaller gals have of it: nothing to do but eat, drink, dance, sing and bring into the world piccaninnies for your masters—eh, my plantation beauty!"

The girl coloured up crimson at this coarse insulting language.

"Let me pass, sir. Back, if you please!"

"Not till I have a kiss, Lola. Come, come: an old

friend. Do you forget you were my property once? Cursed fool I was to sell you! but who'd a thought you'd a turned out such a ring-tailed roarer of a gal as you are? What! you won't—won't you?"

Then he attempted to seize her and kiss her; but she, eluding his grasp like an eel, darted past him, and, as she did so, dealt him a back-handed blow on the mou h.

"You brute, you beast! How dare you?" she cried, her eyes flashing with anger.

With a loud oath he rushed after her as she crossed the room, and endeavoured to intercept her from the stairs leading to the upper portion of the house.

"Stand back! or——"

Quick as thought she snatched up a knife which lay on a table. It gleamed in her hand for a moment, and then Jabez Hack drew on one side. There was that in the girl's look which warned him she was not to be trifled with. At this moment Hubert Glynne appeared at the head of the stairs.

"What is all the noise about? Is that you, Lola?"

"Yes, sir. It's Jabez Hack—he caught hold of me, and tried to kiss me. I'll kill the wretch if he insults me!"

"Jabez Hack, I'll have none of this," said the young master of the estate. "This is my place, and I'll have none of my people ill-used, either field or house hands. Lola, go up to Miss Maude, she wants you."

"Yes, sir."

The girl vanished, and Hubert, turning to Jabez, said—

"Now, Mr. Hack, what do you want?"

"I want to see the 'bos,' Mr. Fang. There's something in the wind on the plantations."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, I've noticed some strange niggers about this two or three days. This evening, as I walked down to the huts, I noticed some o' the niggers a talkin' and whisperin' together in groups and knots. I couldn't hear what they said, but could see plain enough, by their ways, as somethin' was in the wind. Shouldn't wonder if they didn't mean to ~~start~~pede, a lot o' 'em. It's raised

hopes wi' the niggers, the news o' the Yankee fleet a comin' up the river. The cussed fools think they're goin' to be freed right off, and never do another stroke o' work all their lives. Reckon they're out there, a few. A couple o' hours ago I went down to the huts again. All was silent as death. More 'an half o' the field hands was away somewhere, and those as was left, mostly boys and old men. Sure as death there's something up."

"I myself have received a mysterious warning. If you wish to see Mr. Fang, go up into the room. You will find him at the head of the hall."

Hubert Glynne then walked out down to the village, and was himself struck by the singular silence which prevailed. There were few lights to be seen, and not a song or the twanging of a banjo fell on his ear. This was very unusual, and, growing every moment more uneasy, he walked round to the stables to where his own horses and those of his guests were. Next he proceeded to a small strongly-built hut at the back of the house, called the "armoury." Here the arms were kept—cutlasses, muskets, and horse pistols. In those unquiet times, in view of the constant threats which frantic abolitionists held forth of slave insurrection, there were few planters who did not take some precautions of that kind, though all professed to rely implicitly on the probity of their slaves. Hubert himself had not the least suspicion of it until Lola Velasco, his sister's maid, had, on that evening, placed in his hands the mysterious missive, and so urgently pressed upon him its importance. He found the arms all right, as were the horses, and, locking up the armoury, he took another stroll around, but, beyond the solemn silence which reigned, could discover nothing to cause alarm, and so returned to the house. He met Lola hurrying out, with a shawl thrown over her shoulders.

"Where are you going, Lola?" he asked.

"Not far, sir."

"I asked you where," he said, rather sharply; "not whether it was far."

"I will not go, of course, sir, if you do not wish me to."

"You will not tell me, Lola," he said, reproachfully.

"Must I distrust you?"

"Oh, no! no, dear master! You have ever been kind

and gentle to me," she cried. "Indeed, you may trust me—I will lay down my life to serve you. Some day, perhaps, you may have reason to remember the slave girl's gratitude."

"You are a strange girl, Lola," he said, looking at her curiously. "You may do as you please."

"Thanks—a thousand thanks!"

The next moment she was running along the road which led to the house.

Hubert Glynne gazed after her, and muttered to himself, "I can't make that girl out. I believe she is faithful, and attached to me and my sister; but during the last few days there has been something very strange in her manner. I've a great mind to give her her freedom, and get rid of her. She is too beautiful to be about here. Slave though she be, Cassandra Vandaleur would scarcely care to know that one so beautiful was constantly near me—and my slave."

Thus thinking, Hubert Glynne returned to his guests, and seated himself at the head of the table.

Presently Varley Fang entered into conversation with him.

"My head man, Jabez Hack, tells me he thinks there's something up with the niggers, Captain Glynne. Don't believe a word of it."

"He said something of the kind to me, and, to tell the truth, I fancy there is something brewing. I've been down to my people's huts, and all's as quiet as the grave."

"I was talking to your brother Stanton yesterday—met him at the St. Charles's. A cousin of mine—a married lady, wants a maid, half governess, half nurse to her young children—not a negress, but quadroon or octoroon. She's going to the Havannah till this terrible war is over, so she would prefer a slave. Your brother told me you had a girl would exactly suit; in fact, promised me, in your name, to sell her to me."

"Oh, indeed!" said Hubert; "anything my brother said I of course will carry out. What was the girl's name?"

"Lola something," he said; "I forget what else."

Varley Fang closely watched his host as he said this. He saw him change colour and look confused.

"He must have meant Dolora Velasco. We call her Lola for shortness. That was the girl who brought me the letter a short time ago."

"Ah, indeed! a fine, well made girl it is too; clean and decent looking. She would suit my cousin exactly. What would be the price? A thousand dollars would buy her, I suppose?"

"Well, I hardly like parting with her."

"Your brother promised her to me."

"Perhaps, however, it is better the girl should leave here. She has a brother, an untameable fierce fellow, with whom I can do nothing. Had him in the house, but was forced to send him into the fields, on account of his violence and insolence. This lady, of whom you speak, is likely to be a good mistress?"

"The kindest soul in the world. In fact, if she has a fault, it is that she is too indulgent to her servants."

"Well, I will think it over. I shall be in New Orleans to-morrow. There is to be a review, and I have to arrange about a new Louisiana regiment to be raised. I shall be at the St. Charles's. You can call on me there."

"Very good. Pass the Catawba. First-rate wine this of yours, Glynne."

The host, however, was deeply buried in thought. Spite of himself, he could not help thinking of the slave girl and her mysterious warning.

"Yes, yes," he thought to himself, "I am sure the girl had some reason for speaking in the manner she did. Who could have been the sender of the mysterious letter, and what did she know of it? I wish it were twelve o'clock."

He looked at his watch. It was half-past eleven.

"Half an hour more and we shall see whether there was any truth in the warning."

Some one now addressed him. The noise and merriment grew louder, the wine circulated, and everybody forgot the singular episode of the girl and the letter.

A song was called for—then another—and lastly the "Bonnie Blue Flag," the Confederate national air, was shouted forth by all the company. Then Hubert Glynne's health was proposed, and so the time passed on till the midnight hour had chimed.

At ten minutes past twelve Hubert Glynne pulled out his watch and looked at the time.

"A false alarm," he said, after rising and looking from the library towards Gum Tree Hill. "Some foolish joker has been trying to give us all a scare. Ah!"

At that very instant there blazed forth on the distant hill a bright light.

"The Fiery Cross," he shouted, "by all that's holy!"

"The Fiery Cross! The Fiery Cross!" was now echoed on every hand. All crowded out on the balcony, and regarded the strange sight. A large cross of fire was plainly discernible on the top of Gum Tree Hill. The light was not constant and steady, and the flame composing it could be distinguished flickering and playing about.

After the first burst of surprise all gazed out on the meteor-like cross in silent dismay. Hubert Glynne was the first to speak.

"Gentlemen, this is no jest—no trifling matter. The warning note just brought me was a true one. Let us arise, and to horse. Some of us will ride to this midnight rendezvous, while others carry the alarm to the neighbouring plantations. Yon blazing cross means treachery—a slave revolt—a plot to assassinate us all—to arms, gentlemen, and away! Follow me!"

Hubert Glynne rushed from the room, and made his way to the stables. Two old negroes, long past work, were all who could be found about; so, while the gentlemen saddled their horses, Hubert unlocked the armoury and commenced distributing cutlasses and horse pistols to such as were not armed. In ten minutes from the appearance of the Fiery Cross, thirty well armed and mounted men were drawn up in the court-yard of the plantation. Hubert Glynne tacitly took the command.

"Let one of you ride to New Orleans in all haste, giving the alarm at the house of every white you pass on the road. Another make for the Levée road, running north by the river—a third, the same road south—bid every man and boy capable of bearing arms ride in all haste to Gum Tree Hill, where blazes the signal for a slave insurrection. If no time be lost we shall not be too late to crush the revolt in the bud. A little opposition where none

is expected, and the niggers will scatter like sheep. I know the road across the swamp well. Follow me. Forward! March for Louisiana and the Confederate flag, the 'Stars and Bars.' "

Then the whole place echoed with the wild shouts of the now excited and infuriated whites. This was succeeded by the clattering of horses' hoofs, the rattling of arms, as the whole body galloped rapidly off, following the lead of Hubert Glynne.

Each was armed with sword and pistol, while across the back was slung a short-barrelled musket.

Hubert Glynne had not forgotten to see there was plenty of ammunition, so that it was quite a formidable cavalry force he led.

At first inclined to pay little heed to the slave girl's warning, he was now as deeply impressed the other way, and felt assured that a serious mutiny was contemplated—a desperate attempt by the slaves to avenge themselves on their masters by murder, pillage, arson, and all kinds of outrage.

CHAPTER IV

LOLA IS SENTENCED TO A TERRIBLE DEATH.

On leaving her master, Lola used her utmost speed, and following a narrow path leading across the swamp, which ran along one side of the plantation, she presently came to drier and firmer ground. For a moment or two she paused, as if doubtful how to proceed, but shortly went on again. The night was dark, and by her frequent stoppages it seemed that she was not certain of her way. After wandering about for some time, however, she at last discovered a clue which led her to where she wished to go. Though there was no regular path through the rank under-wood, she knew that at a certain place she came to, a way had been broken through by people passing. It wanted little of midnight when she at last arrived at the place of her destination. This appeared to be a sort of clearing,

on a spot of ground a little higher than that which surrounded it.

Lola paused ere venturing into this, looking intently, and listening. Her step had been so light that those who were there before her were not conscious of her presence.

Seated around a small fire were some twenty negroes. Some were smoking, others drinking plantation rum from bottles, while nearly all were talking and gesticulating—as these people will when excited.

Let us glance at this group seated, lying, and reclining around the fire.

All are negroes, attired for the most part in red and white striped cotton shirts and pants. One, who is lying at full length, puffing at a pipe, with his heels kicking in the air, is of enormous size. He stands at least six feet six with huge limbs, like saplings. Very powerful, clumsy, and awkwardly built, this negro has received the name of Kangaroo.

Seated cross-legged, at a little distance from him, is another, who presents a totally different aspect.

This one is diminutive—not above five feet four or five—with small hands and feet. Kangaroo is black as coal, with huge flat nose and protruding lips. This one is a tawny yellow, with small regular features, of scarcely perceptible African type. The retreating forehead and chin, however, and short curly hair, proclaim the fact which the mere shape of nose and mouth might fail to do.

His teeth were small and regular, and by a peculiar conformation of the lips were always bared, so that he seemed to have on his lips a perpetual grin—hideous and repulsive in its nature. This slave was dressed quite differently from the others. He seemed to affect the dandy, for instead of being bareheaded, or wearing a plantation hat, or coloured handkerchief, he had on a Kossuth hat of fine cloth. A white shirt, a pair of black and white check pants, and black cloth jacket, completed the attire of this man, who was known as Hyæna Jones—from his cruel and utterly remorseless disposition.

Around his neck was a blue silk handkerchief, and he even revelled in the possession of a silver watch and two rings, which he wore on his fingers. Mild in manner, polite

and quiet in speech to his superiors, there lurked beneath the smooth gentle exterior an untameable, ferocious, remorseless spirit. The back of this mulatto was scored all over with scars—the visible marks of numerous floggings.

Hyæna Jones had been handed about from owner to owner—plantation to plantation—each new master having bitter cause to regret ever having purchased so bad a bargain. Not that he would not work, or was unskilful—quite the reverse—he was a good handicraftsman, and went through his daily labour well and uncomplainingly. But in whose ever service he had been some disaster had occurred. The house of his last master had been burned to the ground, his wife and two children perishing in the flames. Two days before this event happened, Jones had been punished for theft. The one before this was found murdered one morning, lying on his back, a sharp long-bladed knife sticking in his breast. There was no proof, but Hyæna Jones was supposed to be the author of both these crimes. He had been a house servant in an hotel, and had a kind master and mistress. Strange to say the latter and all her children were taken ill with what was supposed a violent attack of cholera, and died after a few hours' dreadful agony. The disease was supposed to have been brought on through eating heartily of a pumpkin pie, which Hyæna Jones had helped to prepare. Long after the event it was rumoured about that the mulatto had poisoned them. In fact it is not certain that he himself did not boastfully originate the report. When the subject was mentioned by any of his fellow slaves, he would smile a tiger-like smile, chuckle lowly, but never disown the impeachment.

To enumerate the many offences for which he had been punished, and crimes of which he was suspected, is unnecessary. Suffice it to say that his reputation well accorded with his nickname—Hyæna.

We have said enough to give the reader an idea of his character: in the course of the story it will be more fully developed.

Hyæna Jones had been purchased by Hubert Glynné, some two years since, with six others. Of course, had he known his character, he would as soon have thought of

turning loose a wild beast on the plantations. The dealer, however, who sold him managed to conceal this, and when the sale had been effected Hubert found it impossible to dispose of his slave.

From the very first day he had been on the plantation Hyæna Jones had cast his eye upon Dolora, and persecuted the girl eternally with his hateful attentions. She had a perfect horror of the man, and would go a mile out of her path rather than meet him. But she feared as well as hated him. There was something in his basilisk glance which actually made her tremble and shudder when their eyes met. Thus it was that, holding him in such utter detestation, she was never rude, but sought always to escape at the earliest opportunity whenever chance threw them together.

Hyæna Jones on one occasion went to his master, and boldly asked permission to marry Lola, his sister's maid. Hubert replied coldly that the girl might do as she pleased, he never coerced his servants. Thereupon the mulatto sought her out, and informed her that he had his master's orders to take her to wife. Here he miscalculated. He knew the girl feared him, and thought that she would not dare to thwart him. That was not the case, however; Lola contemptuously scorned him, and told him to his face she would rather die than mate with him.

"In what respect am I not as good as you?" he said, sneeringly. "Are not you a slave as well as myself? Are we not both owned by the same master? Perhaps you think, because you are not a negress, that you are a white girl? Fool that you are!—one drop of African blood makes you as abject a slave as the blackest-skinned woman on the estate. You will think better of this. I've got a fancy to you. I've long been thinking of quitting this—I'm tired of being a slave, and mean escaping to the Yankee lines. You can come, too, if you like."

"Thank you, I'll stay here with Miss Maude. When God wills that the slave shall be free, He Himself will strike the fetters from my limbs. I will not purchase freedom by treachery and flight. Master and Miss Maude have always been kind to me, and I will not rob them, even though it be of myself, in whom they have no right save by the law of might."

"You refuse, then, to avail yourself of freedom with me?"

"With you, most certainly."

"Then you shall be mine in bondage."

"I'll die first!"

"Beware! I am not one to be offended with impunity."

"If you threaten me, I will tell Miss Maude."

"Threaten! I will not only threaten, but perform. So sure as they call me Hyæna Jones, I will tame your pride. I will possess myself of you, by fair means, or foul, never fear, my octoroon beauty!"

Lola cut short the interview by leaving him. Going to her mistress, Miss Maude, she straightway made her acquainted with the character of the man. That young lady, who was sincerely attached to her handmaiden, was in a violent rage, and demanded of her brother that Jones should be punished. Miss Maude was hot-blooded and passionate, and Hubert, always accustomed to humour her, gave ear to her complaint. Hyæna Jones, summoned before him, was insolent, whereupon Hubert punished him at once. The slave rose and slunk silently away, but as he did so he shot a glance of desperate malignity on his master and Miss Glynne. His gleaming white teeth and fierce eye seemed to long for their blood, and Lola, noticing the look, trembled. After this event she gave Jones a wide berth, avoiding his presence, and being careful to give no cause of complaint. He was cunning as the serpent, and, though he watched her night and day, waiting his chance, yet so managed as almost to throw her off her guard, and make her think he had resigned his threatened purpose.

Shortly afterwards, the nucleus of the plot which was to culminate in the appearance of the Fiery Cross, was formed. Hyæna Jones entered zealously into it, and soon installed himself as one of the ringleaders.

With savage ferocity he looked forward to the night appointed for the rising. He gloated over, in anticipation, the joys of satiated vengeance, and other unholy passions. He pictured to himself the then beautiful mistress, Miss Maude, in his power; and the girl Lola, too, if possible more beautiful, though a slave.

As the day approached his savage nature grew more savage by brooding over the horrors to come, till on this

night he was wrought up to a pitch of frenzy—capable of any amount of atrocity—ready for any crime.

When the girl saw this man, whom she knew to be her deadly enemy, among the group, her heart failed her. The ungainly forms and repulsive features of the Kangaroo and Pelican gave her no alarm, but the sight of this undersized mulatto, so quiet and stealthy-looking, filled her with dread. She would have retraced her steps and escaped unseen, but as she shrank back, the crackling of a stick on which she trod betrayed her.

Hyæna Jones leaped suddenly to his feet; his cat-like perception had heard the sound, and instantly he was on the alert. Lola's white dress at once betrayed her, and knowing she was observed, she advanced boldly up to the fire in reply to the challenge, "Who's there?"

"Bressed if it ain't Missa Maude's yaller gal," said Kangaroo; "what de dibbel she want along wid us niggers—t'ought the great lady Lola too proud for poor nigger folks!"

It was easy to tell by this remark, and others, that the girl was envied and disliked, on the double ground of her beauty and the supposed pride with which she held herself aloof from all others.

"And what may Miss Lola—I beg pardon, Dolora Velasco, want here among us?" said Hyæna Jones, bowing with mock politeness. "I am not aware that she has had an invitation to our evening party."

The smooth refinement and careful diction of the Hyæna, about which there was no nigger twang—be it known that this mulatto had contrived to scrape together a superficial smattering of learning, and could talk "like a book," as his fellow slaves said—was more repulsive and disagreeable than the coarse speech and hideous laughter of the negroes.

But Lola, collecting all her faculties, spoke out firmly.

"I am aware I am not invited to this meeting, but you see I am aware of it, and also of your intentions, misguided men. I have come to warn you that this attempt can only end in death and disaster to yourselves."

"Ha! then you know there is to be a rising to-night?" put in the Hyæna, sharply.

"I do—and I repeat I have come to warn you. If you are wise, you will return to your huts, all of you, and forbear the attempt even to imbrue your hands in blood."

"Hear! hear! Harken to her, all of you; behold her:—a noble spectacle! a slave girl pleading the cause of the tyrants against her fellow slaves."

"Down with her—smash her up—split her skull with a log!"

"Yes!" almost screamed the Hyæna, working himself up to a frenzy; "look at her—as she stands before us and bids us have mercy on those who never spared us. Look at her, I say—a traitress, a renegade!"

So soon as the howl of rage which followed these words had subsided, Dolora Velasco, raising her hand as though to still the noise and demand a hearing, spoke.

"Call me what you will—do with me what you choose—kill me if you like, but listen."

Her commanding attitude and fearless demeanour ensured her a hearing.

"I have come to warn you that your projected attempt must fail, and recoil on your own heads."

"It's a lie!" screamed Hyæna Jones. "From all parts of the country thousands of slaves will assemble at the rendezvous when it shall shine out in the night. Perhaps you know it, Miss Lola?"

"Yes—the Fiery Cross. I know that many misguided men will flock to the signal; but I also know that there will be other men there—stern, determined, dauntless men, mounted and armed—each one more than a match for a dozen such as these."

And as she spoke she glanced round contemptuously on the half-drunken rabble which surrounded her. There was too much truth in her words for them not to excite the anger of her audience.

"It's a lie—a d—d lie!" yelled the Hyæna; "a black man's as good as a white man—and our cowardly tyrants shall taste this night of the slaves' vengeance."

"Tyrants, perhaps," said the girl, undauntedly, "but not cowards—you know that, all of you, as well as I. Our masters are unjust and cruel in that they assume a right to property in their fellow men—but cowards. no! Even this

war, which has now raged for a year, has proved them the superiors of our boasted friends the Yankees in courage. How much, then, are they superior in valour to the descendants of the African savages?"

A perfect howl of rage greeted these words of the slave girl. But she seemed to be inspired, and stood dauntlessly facing all these savage excited negroes. Several advanced threateningly towards her, but Hyæna Jones at this moment spoke up—

"Let her go on—let her say what she has to say, then we'll deal with her."

So intent were all the party on the girl, that not one had observed that the expected beacon was already alight, the Fiery Cross beaming forth from the hill.

Lola knew it, as she stood facing that direction, but she was only too glad they did not observe it, and went on—

"I repeat again, misguided men, that nothing but disaster to yourselves can result from this rising. The white men are aware of it, and you will be confronted at every point by men better armed than yourselves—men accustomed to warfare and to acting in concert. Your plot is known, and measures have been taken to meet it."

"A lie—a lie! She's tryin' to scare us."

"Look here, young woman, you say our enemies know of it. How can they do so, unless you or some one has betrayed us?"

"It matters not how—they do know."

"Then it is you who are the traitress?"

"Believe so if you choose," she replied, defiantly.

"Hark to her—she owns to it. What is the punishment of a renegade?"

"Death, death! Let's string her up! Down with the slave who takes the white man's part!"

They now flocked around her with threatening gestures and language. She was pushed about, and it seemed that they were about to tear her to pieces, as a pack of hungry wolves would a lamb.

"Hold on a bit!" cried Hyæna Jones, interposing: "let's do it in regular order—let's try her, and sentence her!"

This proposal met with ready acquiescence from the

negroes, who enjoyed immensely anything with formality and importance about it.

"Now sit down, all of you, in a row. I'll be judge; and stand by her to see she don't escape. First, I'll say a few words to her, though."

These savage half-drunken animals adopted the Hyæna's suggestion without discussion, and squatted themselves in a row.

The self-elected judge came to the girl, wan, pale, and trembling at the prospect of death, which appeared so imminent. Seizing her by the arm, he said, in a low tone—

"Lola, you shunned and spurned me once—now it is my turn. These men will all obey me! I am their ringleader and they will do whatever I choose. Your life is in my hands. Look around you, and judge for yourself whether I speak truly. I can save you—and will, on one condition!"

Life is dear to all. Lola did look round, and saw, in the gleaming eyes and savage faces of the negroes, that they were indeed ripe for any atrocity.

"On what conditions? What is it you require?"

"What you can grant, and at once, too! We'll have a merry wedding, right off! Parson Beelzebub" (a nick name for one of the negroes) "shall tie us up, and we'll seal the bargain in no time."

"Seal the bargain!" the girl replied, gazing around her bewildered and terrified.

"Aye, yes! you understand—you're no fool. Listen! I'll whisper, lest it should shock your modesty if I speak aloud."

The girl turned deadly pale, as she heard the insulting words he whispered in her ear. Then she blushed crimson, and cried, indignantly,—

"You wretch! how dare you?"

Though a slave, she had been well, even delicately, reared and cared for, and now was more of a friend and companion to her mistress than aught else. Of her past life, and the strange events which brought her as a slave on the plantation of the brothers Glynne, we shall have more to say hereafter.

For a moment or two Hyæna Jones regarded her in silence.

"Do you refuse? Be careful! I will not ask you again. I'm in no humour to be played with! I'd almost as soon have your life as the other thing I ask—so choose between."

"God will protect me, you accursed wretch!" she screamed, hysterically; "I defy you, and put my trust in Him!"

"Gentlemen of the jury," said the self-elected judge, with a sardonic grin, "I will proceed to put the prisoner on her trial. What say you, prisoner, are you guilty, or not guilty?"

"I refuse to acknowledge your right to question me, and laugh at this mockery of justice."

Had the members of the court been less swayed by passion and intoxicated with raw rum, they might, perhaps, have felt some little respect, if not admiration, for the heroic demeanour of the girl.

"Gentlemen of the jury," pursued the Hyæna, "the prisoner is obstinate, and refuses to make submission to this honourable court. It is my duty as judge to inform you that she is clearly guilty of the charges brought against her. Your verdict, gentlemen—we have no time to spare—guilty or not guilty?"

"Guilty, guilty, guilty!" was shouted by half a dozen voices.

"Hang her!" "Cut her throat!" "Smash her head in!" yelled others.

"Gentlemen," said Hyæna Jones, "allow me to call you to order; it is the judge's place to pronounce sentence. I have thought of one which will, I trust, meet your views. The prisoner, by her own confession, has betrayed us; she acknowledges that she has informed our enemies of the rendezvous at the Fiery Cross. See! yonder it blazes. We have here a barrel of turpentine and tar in order to light the signal on Barton Clump. Kangaroo, get a rail, and you, Pelican, go and get a sapling about ten feet high."

These orders were quickly executed, though no one knew what was his object. The unfortunate girl, her faculties benumbed by terror, gazed in astonishment at the singular preparations made under the inspection of her enemy.

So soon as the rail was brought he commenced to wear

it all over with a mixture of tar, turpentine, and loose cotton, a bag of which they had brought with them. Then the same was done with the tall sapling which Pelican brought.

"Now, then, one of you help me bind her arms to this rail."

It was quickly done, for the poor girl was powerless to resist in the grasp of those strong, brutal men. Still, no one but the ringleader knew what her punishment was to be. They were not long left in suspense.

"Now, then," said the Hyæna, in a voice which sounded like the snarl of his prototype, "bring along the sapling, and I'll explain to you what is the judge's sentence on a traitor to our cause. We'll just make a cross in the rough, tar it all over, tie her to it, tar her all over, hoist her up, *and set a light to her!* Won't that be a fine beacon, my bully boys? Down with the traitress; drag her along; now for the tar bucket."

As the unhappy girl heard this terrible sentence—a sentence which she knew, by the savage demeanour and language of the negroes, would be carried out—a piercing shriek broke from her. Hyæna Jones struck her on the mouth, but, overcome by horror at the thought of such a death, her screams only redoubled.

"Quick! Come along! Lay her down, and tie the sapling to the cross-beam. Then up with her, and hurrah for the Fiery Cross!"

Wildly she gazed around, and implored pity—at least that they would kill her at once: the mocking laugh of the Hyæna, and frantic yells from the others, were her only answer.

Her clothes are almost torn from her back by the rough handling of these demons—her soft delicate arms and the upper part of her body smeared with tar.

Seeing there was no hope, she breathed a prayer, commended herself to God, and prepared to meet her fate.

CHAPTER V.

RESCUE OF LOLA.

HUBERT GLYNNE rode forth from the court-yard at the head of the little band of white men, keeping a sharp look-out. There were not wanting indications to convince him that this was no false alarm, but that the Fiery Cross, which ever and anon gleamed on his eyes, was indeed the signal for a slave rising.

Several times he had seen a dark form in the road before him. On these occasions he would spur his horse, and endeavour to overtake the object, but always before he could do so it would dart from the road, and plunge into the swamp on either side, where it was next to impossible for a horseman to follow. Not, however, before he could make out the nature of the object—in every case a negro, running at full speed in the direction of the Fiery Cross. He could make out that most of those he passed carried arms, and even recognized one or two as his own hands.

"Hi! Sebastian—you slinking cur—stop, or I'll shoot you down!" This he shouted to one who, taken unawares, allowed him to approach close enough for recognition before darting into the cypress swamp. But Sebastian—for it was indeed the slave-girl's brother—paid no heed to this command, but plunged out of the road and sought concealment and safety in the bush.

Hubert's pistol is raised. He has a good view of the fugitive, who at that moment stumbled and fell in full sight. Beyond all doubt he could have shot him down, for he was an excellent marksman. But he forbore.

"No! he is Lola's brother, and I will spare him for her sake. Besides, I am not quite certain it is he, and should not like to risk killing an innocent man, who might, perchance, be out on no evil mission."

And so this little band of whites rode swiftly on, winding in and out as they followed the tortuous swamp road, but ever tending toward and keeping their eyes fixed on the Fiery Cross, which gleamed brighter and brighter as they approached it. Presently the road grew wider and less

quaggy, then it again narrowed, and they rode on almost in darkness through rank brush, wild cane, and hickory trees, overshadowing them on either side.

Suddenly there rings out on the night air a piercing shriek, followed by another and another.

A woman in danger or distress! Such is the conviction carried instantaneously to each one.

Hubert Glynne reins in his horse, and peers through the darkness in the direction whence the sounds come.

He discerns a faint glimmering light on the left hand, distant, apparently, somewhat less than a quarter of a mile.

"Follow me, gentlemen. Some of these black devils are ill-using a woman, I expect."

Without a moment's hesitation he breasted his horse at the thick scrub and plunged into the midst of it, heedless of scratches and tears. Bending low over his horse's neck, to avoid as much as possible the thorny branches, he rode straight on towards the light, followed by his friends. A couple of minutes brought them to an open space, and as they dashed out into it a sight met his eyes which filled him with rage and indignation. The open space was partly natural, and had partly been cleared purposely. Twelve or fifteen negroes were here assembled, who, on the approach of the horsemen, scattered in alarm. A log fire was burning, and threw a lurid glare around. By its light he saw the figure of a woman, her light drapery disarranged, and almost torn from her back—her arms extended and bound to a rail of wood, while near by lay a long pole. What this meant Hubert Glynne could not conjecture; it sufficed that she was a woman, and being ill-used. At the sudden apparition of a party of mounted men bursting in upon them the negroes scattered and endeavoured to fly, leaving the girl standing, with extended arms strongly bound to the rail.

Quick as thought Hubert had caught up with two of the fugitives, who, running side by side, endeavoured to escape. One darted to the left as he overtook them, the other to the right; too late, however, for their own safety; for, rising in his stirrups, his cavalry sabre gleamed in the light—once, twice, and instantly two dusky forms lay bleeding on the ground.

"Down with them! No quarter! Cut down the cowardly slaves!" he shouted, and suiting the action to the word, another negro fell under his avenging sword. Shrieks, shouts, and yells now made the night air hideous. In the brief space of a minute, eight of the negroes lay dead or dying on the ground; the others had managed to escape into the swamp and jungle.

Hubert, leaping from his horse, hastened to the female, whom he at first thought to be some Southern lady. Imagine his astonishment when he saw that it was his own slave girl, Dolora Velasco.

"Lola!" he exclaimed; "you here, and in such a position! What does this mean?"

"Cover me up—cover me up! Pray cover me, and unfasten my arms," she cried, burning with blushes and shame, "then I will tell you all."

She was naked almost to the waist, and her young master, snatching up her shawl, which lay close by, threw it over her, and then hastened to unfasten her hands, which were bound to the rail. He now noticed that this piece of wood was smeared with a mixture of tar, cotton, and turpentine. At a loss to understand this, he felt more annoyance than anything else at soiling his hands. So soon as the girl was free she endeavoured to arrange her disordered attire, but her trembling hands refused their office. Trembling with terror and excitement, she felt sick and faint. She tottered, staggered a few paces, and would have fallen, but Hubert caught her in his strong arms and supported her.

"My poor girl, what have these wretches been doing to you?"

The girl could only reply by a gasping sob, and was fain to recline her head on her master's shoulder.

The situation was not without its charm, and Hubert's heart beat faster, and a flush came to his cheek as he felt the girl clinging to him—reclining on him.

"Here, Gordon, you've got a whisky flask; hand it here, quick! The poor girl is fainting."

He poured a large draught into the girl's mouth, and though it almost choked her, this remedy produced the desired effect, and recovered her from the faintness.

"Lola, do you know your road home?" asked Hubert. "I cannot wait here, we have work to do elsewhere. I know now that your warning was a true one."

As he spoke he moved away, and was about mounting his horse; but she came up to him, and with clasped hands said, imploringly—

"Oh! no, no! do not leave me! I shall again fall into the hands of these terrible men; they will kill me if they find me; the whole swamp swarms with them; they are all hurrying to the rendezvous."

"Jump up before me on the saddle, then," he said. "Make haste, I have no time to spare."

He gave her his hand, and she, placing one foot on his, was lifted up before him.

"My poor girl," he said, kindly, "I am deeply indebted to you for the warning of what was to happen, otherwise I should not have known the meaning of the Fiery Cross. It would have been cruel to have left you. Hold tight to me. Are you comfortable?"

"Yes, thank you, sir."

Then again Hubert put spurs to his horse, and the whole body of gentlemen plunged again into the brush, and shortly emerged into the road they had left when attracted by the girl's cries.

On to the Fiery Cross! Whip and spur for dear life, and the lives and honour of all most dear to them.

CHAPTER VI.

FORWARD.

THERE is always something exciting and exhilarating in horse-riding. The feeling of bestriding so swift and powerful an animal gives the rider also a consciousness of strength and insensibility to danger. When a body of men, armed and with one common object, are riding together, this feeling is greatly increased, and, as a rule, no thought of fear has place in the heart of even the most timid.

Certainly not one of the gallant band which followed the

lead of Hubert Glynne took one thought of the dangerous nature of their errand. The quick bounding thunder of their horses' hoofs had echo in the wild beating of their hearts, as they neared the goal—the Fiery Cross! which gleamed brighter and brighter on the sight as they approached.

The ground gradually rose as they rode on, and there was a prospect over the flat landscape to right and left.

“See!” said Lola, who, clinging to her young master as she sat before him on the saddle-bow, had now resumed her self-possession, “more beacon lights!”

And Hubert Glynne, following the direction of her glance, counted one, two, three, four fiery signals on the one hand, and three on the other. These were the responsive beacons to the principal one on Gum Tree Hill, and showed that at other places, besides the one to which they were riding, the slaves were on the alert and gathering for revolt.

All were now fully impressed with the dangerous nature of the crisis, and in the heart of each burned a fierce desire to strike a sharp and decisive blow, and by killing and dispersing the armed slaves at the principal rendezvous, to nip the insurrection in the bud, and strike terror into the hearts of the others.

True, the little band now riding in hot haste towards the fiery beacon on the hill numbered only five-and-twenty, but then they were well mounted, and the greater part of them, trained to arms, were accustomed to act in concert. They possessed, too, the lordly consciousness and, perhaps, overweening pride of a superior race; and in the open field it would, indeed, be a large force of untrained negroes who could resist them.

Nearer and nearer they approach the goal where blazes the meteor light. Peering through the darkness towards the circle of light around the signal, they can now discern dark forms moving about, and can hear the wild shouts and cries of the insurgents.

Suddenly Hubert Glynne gives the word to halt, and the little troop pulls up.

Briefly he explains his plan of action. At once simple and easy of execution, it promises success. The hill is circular

in form, a thick scrub covering the base, but nearly bare at the top and on the sides. One-half of the little band start off at a trot for the opposite side, and when arrived there, a pistol shot and a shout are to be the signal, and then simultaneously they are to charge upon the enemy, while the party detailed off to attack on the opposite side are stoutly making their way through the thick brush. Hubert Glynne and those with him saw to their fire-arms, tightened their saddle girths, and prepared for the coming conflict. Now that the horses' hoof-falls no longer drowned all other sounds, they could hear a terrible noise proceeding from the top of the hill. Confused yells, cries of command, snatches of songs, and premature shouts of triumph and exultation, showed how little the insurgent slaves were prepared for resistance, and how unfit to carry out the plot.

Hubert lifted Lola from the saddle, and said kindly, "My good girl, you must seek a place of safety. Here—take one of my pistols. It is impossible you can ride on my saddle-bow when we attack."

"Ah! you will not leave me here? I am not afraid to share danger with you, master—but I tremble at the thought of being left alone—perhaps again to fall into their power."

He looked doubtful and uncertain for a moment or two, then a thought struck him.

"Ha! I have it. Jump up on the saddle again, place your foot in the stirrup, give me your hand—so!"

Then he guided his horse beneath a cypress tree close by, whose branches descended as low as his shoulder as he sat his horse.

"Mount here, Lola, and you will be safe. Stand up on the saddle-bow—steady—so—there you are. Now take this pistol, and, if you are discovered, defend yourself. So soon as we have scattered these hell-hounds I will return to you. Hark! the pistol shot! Farewell!"

"God watch over and defend you, dear master," the girl murmured from her post in the tree.

"Now, gentlemen, two deep. Hurrah for Louisiana! *Charge!*"

Then, with a ringing shout which was echoed from the other side by the little band, they drove spurs into their horses' flanks, and, sword in hand, thundered up the hill.

Now, negroes, turn and fight; the time for carousing and shouting songs of triumph is past—your tyrants are at hand—the avengers are upon you!

To the loud shouts of the assailants there succeeded a silence, broken only by the crash of the brushwood and the sounds of galloping horses as they pressed up the hill.

Some two hundred negroes were assembled around the Fiery Cross, which blazed on the summit of the hill.

Then there came cries of alarm and terror, as the stern voices of the white men were heard shouting "Forward! death to the slave dogs!"

A rush to arms, a scattering volley, and the horsemen are upon them.

Now come the sharp cracks of the revolvers, the fierce yells of the infuriated whites, and the flaming of the bright sabres in the light.

The attack has commenced, and though four of Hubert's party have their horses shot under them, and fall headlong to earth, the others press on, leading straight for the dense mass around the signal, who are protected by a rough barricade of tar-barrels, timber, and brushwood.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CAMP AT THE FIERY CROSS.

A SCENE, at once ludicrous and terrible, with burlesque and tragedy mingled, was being enacted on the top of the hill on which was displayed the blazing beacon. It was formed of two railroad irons, securely bound and riveted together, across which, at the proper height, another was lashed, so as to make a cross. One end of the two bars thus fastened together was firmly imbedded in the stump of a tree, about five feet from the ground. The bars composing the cross were wrapped all round with cotton soaked in a mixture of tar, turpentine, and grease, so as to burn with a bright flame when kindled.

At twelve o'clock a light was applied, and almost

instantly the flames shot along the appointed signal, and the blazing cross was the result.

Then there went up such a yell as might have issued from the throats of a set of devils, who had broken loose from hell. A hundred dusky forms were dancing, capering, and howling in wild triumph around this signal and symbol of rebellion.

Poor fools! with the unreasoning excitability of their race—as easily worked up to savage frenzy as scattered in wild panic—they acted as though this were the crowning conquest of their plot for freedom, instead of but the signal for the commencement of the struggle.

While some are thus giving way to delirious joy, let us take a look at the whole group as they appear beneath the blaze of the flame.

Most of them are naked to the waist, wearing only cotton pants and shoes. Some, however, have cotton shirts, and all, without exception, have coloured handkerchiefs bound about their heads, in which red predominates. This is probably intended as a distinguishing badge. Some wear striped cotton shirts, and all are armed in some sort—old muskets, pistols, and rusty swords are the weapons of which a part boast, while others have only knives, and sticks or bars of iron.

A sort of rude encampment is made around the beacon by means of barrels, bundles, two or three rough carts, a heap of timber of all descriptions, and logs of wood. Doubtless the planner of this fort plumed himself greatly on his skill in fortification. Not that these unhappy wretches had any idea of standing a siege here, for their dreams were of plunder and arson on their masters' houses and estates, and murder and outrage on their persons and those of their family, but because he who was at present chief among them had, with all the imitative faculty of a savage, decided in his own mind that to have a fort was the proper thing to do.

Behold the redoubtable chief of this conspiracy, which, ludicrous as it seemed, might be formidable so far as bloodshed and horrors went, if no further.

He is known by his fellow slaves as "Sandy-with-the-Hump," on account of a partial deformity which gave him

the appearance of being hump-backed. Not that he was by any means a cripple, for he was possessed of great strength and agility, could run swiftly and long, and, so far as endurance and muscular power went, might prove a formidable adversary. But there was wanting stern courage, and the resolution of the superior race, as also the quiet intelligence and presence of mind, which has won so many victories for the Caucasian type of the *genus homo* over all others.

He stands with folded arms—two pistols stuck in his belt, a sword hanging by his side. Proudly he stands, and views the answering signals—at first twinkling lights, then bright flames, which shoot up in many places within the field of view commanded by the hill.

His face was not wanting in intelligence, though of the true African type, with eyes small, black, piercing, and set wide apart, beneath a low, broad, and more prominent forehead than usual with the negro. He could read and write, but had no learning. The amount of his reading extended only to such books as could be procured on the plantation—very few in number. In one of these there was an account of the negro of St. Domingo, Toussaint L'Ouverture. This fired the ambition of Sandy, who, to do him justice, had more acuteness and adaptability than his fellow slaves. But, unfortunately, it was only the cunning and adaptability of an animal; nor had he any of the talent which distinguished the celebrated Toussaint L'Ouverture.

This was the man who had installed himself as one of the leaders of the movement—not so much by his abilities, or even force of character—by constantly thrusting himself forward. The facile negroes, unused to act or think for themselves, were only too glad to receive directions and orders from one who, by the dictatorial way he spoke, ought to know.

The idea of the beacon light, and the arrangements by which it was secretly made known to all disaffected slaves that this was to be the signal for revolt, was due to a subtler intellect than his. But the ridiculous parody of a fort on the hill-top was entirely his own. The pride and self-satisfaction of the niggers who under his orders threw up this flimsy barricade were almost equal to his own, and no doubt they fancied they were now real soldiers.

"Now then, you Black Sam, dry up caperin', and dab more tar and turps on de beacon, 'less you want me to ram your head in de bucket, and set fire to dat."

Sandy-with-the-Hump thought it incumbent on him, as a chief, to show his importance by swearing at and threatening his subordinates—a practice which, unfortunately, prevails in other communities. Black Sam, whom he addressed, was so called on account of his being a shade darker than the darkest nigger among them.

In obedience to Sandy's order this nigger hastened to apply a mixture of tar and turpentine to such parts of the Fiery Cross as had nearly burned out. This he accomplished by dipping a lump of cotton in the bucket, and, when well saturated with the compound, fixing it in a long split stick, and so applying it.

"Hurroo for liberty! Hoo—hi—hoo!"

"Dis am de day for de niggers. We'll show de white man wedder he jump on us al'ays. Down wid de tyrant buckra! Hurroo for blood and glory!"

Shouts rent the air, accompanied by fragments of songs and wild yells, expressing nothing in particular but the frantic rage of the negroes. Some were already quite drunk, for there were two kegs of fiery rum to which all had free access. Indeed, it is doubtful whether their chief's authority would have been sufficient to deter them from this had he even attempted it. Each moment the mob around the light was increased by others coming in, in fours, sixes, and even in dozens; and it was understood that within an hour from the signal the band of revolted slaves would be swelled to several hundreds.

Each of the smaller lights which were scattered about the country around were the rallying places for slaves on particular plantations, who, after mustering, would hurry on as best they could to the grand rendezvous.

So far as the preliminary arrangements were concerned, the revolt was well planned. The spot chosen for the gathering—the time—the secrecy and despatch with which intelligence had been transmitted to all those disposed to join—and the care with which an inkling of the intended rising was concealed from the whites, and those of their own class likely to betray them—all this had been managed with a skill and cunning which gave promise of success.

Indeed, that so extensive a revolt could be organized under the very eyes of the slave-owners and other whites, might well seem marvellous.

It can best be accounted for by the contempt in which the superior held the inferior race, and their confidence in their fidelity. As to the latter, it is well known that, during the Indian mutiny, many colonels and officers of sepoy regiments could not be brought to believe that their men were disaffected until they were attacked and shot down.

As each band of niggers joined the standard of insurrection they were welcomed by extravagant demonstrations of joy. Those who had not arms had weapons of some kind given to them out of the common stock, which consisted of a miscellaneous pile huddled up on one of the rough carts. To judge by the strange assortment they must have been collected for a long time, and many by their appearance seemed as though they had been buried, which was probably the case.

One by one the lights on the country round went out. This meant that those assembled there were on their road to join.

At about an hour after midnight Sandy-with-the-Hump endeavoured to get something like order, in which he only partially succeeded, as some persisted in singing and dancing in spite of his shouting and threatening.

"Silence dere, you big buck nigger, and listen to yersifer!"

"Silence yerself! I'se a free nigger now, and ain't goin' to do nuffin more all my life but dance, and sing, and kiss de lubly plantation gals. Hurroo, my bully boys! we's all free niggers now!"

"So we is! No more hominy and pork for dis chicken—no, nor plantation gals nuther. Reckon I'se as good as any white muck—and it's a lubly white gal I goes for. Hi! When do the fi'tin' and fun begin?"

Then this nigger indulged in a wild dance, singing all the while the chorus of a song; nor would he stop till he was fairly tired out.

At last the noise, though not stopped, was abated, and the self-elected chief proceeded to survey his forces.

"Whar's Hyæna Jones?" he asked one of his gang.

"Closish by dis time, boss. Dar light war down thar," pointing with his finger, "an' it's bin out dis quarter."

At this moment there came a fresh irruption, and then the old routine of shouting and cheering was gone through again to welcome them.

Slowly the beacon-light faded, as the nigger Black Sam no longer fed the flames; and, as the blaze dies out, so does the noise, till it is possible to hear the human voice without the words being shouted out.

"Now, my boys," said Sandy-with-the-Hump, "in a few minutes we's about to start, an' de fite begins. Dis mornin' we was slaves; dis night we're free."

A great shout went up at this, and the orator went on, warming to his subject, and not particular as to exactitude.

"For t'ousands ob year de por black man's bin squelched beneat' der iron heel ob de white tyrant. White man say work, and black man must work, or be flog wid de cruel whip. If black man offend white, den ag'in come de whip; and, my brudders, if black man strike white, de poor slave is hanged, no matter what de oder hab done. Some niggers perhaps hab it in dere hearts to be merciful. Some say, 'Young missa nurse me when I sick;' nudder say, 'Massa kind to me;' nudder say, 'he no like kill;' but dis nigger say, *Kill all de cussed brood!*"

Up rose another shout on the night air—long, loud, and hoarse

"Aye, kill 'em all—young an' old—take dere lubly daughters and make 'em suffer what our nigger gals hab to suffer from de wicked passions ob dere massas. Kill all de young men, and de old men, and kill de babies, but keep de white gals; and de bravest ob dis our brave nigger army shall hab 'em to do as dey like. Hab no mercy! Tink ob de wrongs we suffer—tink of our own little ones—our gals—our own wives—tink of all dis. Remember dat you werc slaves, and hab such a vengeance dat de little white children sall be drown in dere fathers' and mothers' blood!"

The shouting and yelling which followed this fierce and diabolical speech lasted so long, that the orator dismounted from the barrel, perhaps willing to wind up with so blood-thirsty a sentence. Then some struck up another song, and others commenced dancing in wild frenzy

But all at once there came a terrified shout.

"De white men—hark to de hosses!"

And, sure enough, now the rapid clatter of hoofs is heard, and the stern shouts of the whites fall on the terrified ears of the insurgent slaves.

A rush is made to arms, and the clatter of muskets and swords mingles with shrill cries of alarm, for already a great number are in a state of utter panic.

A few scattered shots and the horsemen are upon them.

Sandy-with-the-Hump fired both the muskets at his feet and the pistol, and then ran to possess himself of another. Perhaps he relied upon his rude and feeble intrenchment. If he did so, it was without reason, for before he could load another musket, a horseman dashed over a part of the barrier, and crashed through the rest, sending barrels and boards flying in all directions.

"Down with them—down with the murdering hounds!" a stern voice shouts; and others, following his example, break through the weak defences, and are upon the now terrified mob within the barrier before they can form any sort of order.

Then is heard the sharp crack of the revolver, mingled with the howling of the wounded and the quick tramp of the plunging horses.

The sharp sabres gleam in the light of the beacon (which now serves to reveal those who lit it to their assailants), and right and left each horseman cuts with unrelenting fury. With every blow some unhappy wretch falls, with a scream of pain, weltering in his blood.

A rush is made by the panic-stricken negroes to escape, and some have climbed over the barrier at a point opposite to where the first assailants dashed in. But here they are met by the party despatched to the other side of the hill, who, charging up, sabre those who have crossed, and then, excited by the loud shouts of their friends within, rush their horses at the barricade, the brutes coming plunging in on a confused mass of black humanity huddled together, and vainly screaming for mercy.

Mercy?

At such a time they might as well bid the panther have mercy and loose his prey, a bull-terrier loose a rat in his

jaws. Many perished beneath the hoofs of the horses—more beneath the savage thrusts and cuts of the sharp sabres. At that moment the exasperated planters took no thought of the fact that they were destroying their own property. At such times men do not stop to reason, but, urged on by excitement and passion, all they seek is objects to vent their rage upon.

“Ha! you hump-backed cripple, you are here, you hypocritical scoundrel, are you? This on your hump, you wretch!”

It was the owner of Sandy-with-the-Hump who spoke, as, suiting action to words, he made a savage cut on the shoulders of the negro. With a howl of pain the late blood-thirsty orator rushed bleeding away, and sought shelter from his pursuer behind the stump on which was erected the beacon. His master, with fierce gleaming eye, and sword dripping with blood, spurred his horse in pursuit. The nigger dodged behind the stump, and one sweeping blow aimed at him caught the bar of iron forming the upright of the Fiery Cross, in its descent shivering the blade and for the moment saving the slave's life.

But the same blow shook the beacon from its socket—it tottered and fell, still burning, across some barrels, one of which contained powder. Near this some forty or fifty trembling wretches were crouching, and, as best they could, crawling away.

A flash—a shock—a stunning roar!

Many of the horsemen are hurled to the ground by the explosion—others' horses break madly away in terror, some throwing their riders. But it is not on these that the most terrible effect is produced. Among the wretched beings in the immediate vicinity the destruction is awful. Some are almost blown to pieces, all burned, scorched, blackened and stunned.

So soon as the sound of the explosion had died away, there is heard a deep hollow moaning, and the stench of burning flesh is mingled with that of gunpowder. A calm succeeds the noise immediately preceding the blow-up. All—whites and negroes—are for the moment awed into silence, and no sound is heard for several seconds but the groans and cries of the wounded, and the neighing of frightened horses. First to recover themselves are the

whites, and ere the blinding smoke has cleared away, they are heard calling to each other.

"Glynne—Hubert—where are you? Are you hurt?"

"Here, my boy! only bruised a bit."

"Foster—Graham—where are you?"

"Here—here."

One by one the whites collect together, and it is shortly found that, with the exception of one with a broken arm, two with ribs the same, and several rather badly bruised and scorched, all are safe.

The moon shines out now, and, as the smoke is dispersed by the wind, it is seen that there are no more to kill. The encampment now contains only the planters, grouped together, repairing damages, and attending to their own hurts and those of their horses; and scattered about in all directions, in all conceivable positions, the negroes; some lying stark and stiff, staring with blind eyes up to heaven; others twisted and distorted by the death agony; others, again, huddled together in groups, scorched, almost torn limb from limb by the explosion, and scarce bearing a semblance of humanity.

Of some three hundred frantic, shouting insurgents, who half an hour before thronged around the Fiery Cross, only about a hundred have escaped—many of these desperately wounded.

The rest have been accounted for by pistol-shot, sabre, and the scorching blast of the gunpowder.

CHAPTER VIII.

AFTER THE FIGHT.

A VERY brief council of war was held after this desperate affair. The scene was one of which a painter could have made a great picture. The circular space strewn with bodies, the cross of iron still glowing faintly, logs of wood burning slowly, and smoking from the heat of the explosion—and near the centre the group of horsemen standing together, resting, and talking in low tones.

The heaving flanks of the horses and the hard breathing of the men alone told of the desperate exertions they had gone through. Not one of the little band of whites bestowed a thought on the dead and dying, whose moans became each moment fainter; for the shock of the explosion had stunned those who were near, and killed the already badly wounded at a little distance.

"It is no use doing things by halves," said Hubert Glynne, decisively. "We may have only scotched the snake. There is little fear of any of these wretches troubling us more;" and he smiled grimly as he spoke, glancing around, "nor indeed those who have escaped. I'll wager they've had a scare that will keep them from conspiring for a while; still, there may be some of them lurking about, and if we leave them in peace they may get together again, make themselves drunk, and perhaps do a little damage—anyhow, give us a good deal of trouble."

Hubert Glynne spoke with the utmost contempt and nonchalance, as though he scorned the very thought of such beings as those they had just routed doing any serious mischief now they were on their guard.

And truly the ease with which the blacks had been defeated and cut down in their panic, with scarce an attempt at resistance, might almost justify this contempt.

"I'm with you there, Hubert; let's hunt them out of their lurking-places, if there are any about. It's a bright night now the moon is up, which is all in our favour. Suppose we scatter and ride through the bush, 'beating' it, in fact, as they do in England to drive foxes out. I'm for having no mercy. I cut down two fellows whom I recognized as my own men—both valuable."

"See here," said Hubert Glynne. "I propose to do this. There are two or three of ours hurt, and some of the horses are wounded. I propose we leave the wounded here and two others; then let one ride off to the nearest station for a carriage, and send for a surgeon (there's one stopping at Blake's on leave), then the rest of us can make a wide circle, and capture or shoot every black scoundrel we find lurking about."

This proposition was received with good favour by all.

"Tell you what," suggested another, "we might trap

some more of the devils, who don't know of the bad luck their friends have had. Let's hoist this beacon affair, and light it again—a cross, ain't it?—it's soon done. Here's a tar-barrel—what do you say?"

There was something in the idea which pleased, and it was at once acted upon. That any who knew not of the defeat and slaughter of the others should flock to join what they supposed a large body of their fellow conspirators, and be captured, "with their own petard," as the saying is, seemed to these angry men a piece of retributive justice. So, once again the iron rails are daubed with tar, and again the Fiery Cross blazes out, amid the triumphant shouts of the victors.

In accordance with the arrangement proposed by Hubert Glynne, one of the party rides off for assistance, while the rest, except six, three of whom are badly hurt, ride off to scour the neighbourhood, and hunt out any wretched fugitives hiding on the borders of the swamp, in the cane-brake, or in the brush. It is settled that though each man shall ride alone, all shall keep within earshot of one another, so that in case of meeting any considerable body, the whole force of whites may be quickly on the spot to render an account of them.

It was a strange occupation, on that now calm, bright, moonlight night, for some twenty mounted men to be riding about with watchful eye; hand ready to seize sword or pistol, as might be most convenient; and bent on cutting down or shooting any unfortunate negro found prowling about or lurking concealed. But there was some excuse for the savage resentment which burned in their breasts. They knew the character of the blacks—ferocious beyond belief when excited and victorious; cowardly, and easily subdued when firmly met by prompt measures. Each thought of what would have been the fate of their homes, their wives, sisters, and little ones, had the band of infuriated demons which they had broken up burst down upon the plantations without warning. Under certain circumstances, and encouraged by a first success, the negroes would fight, and their bloody saturnalia might not have been brought to a close perhaps for days. Each shuddered at the thought, and, with clenched teeth, rode hard after every negro. He hovered, shooting without mercy when it was impossible to

get within sword play. Hubert Glynne presently remembered the slave girl Lola, whom for safety he had caused to mount a tree. "Poor girl," he thought, "I hope she is all right. She must have been rarely frightened by the noise and the blow-up. I will ride that way, and see how it fares with her." Accordingly, rising in his stirrups, he looked around him so as to ascertain his exact locality. As he did so he saw a shadow flit across an open glade about fifty yards from him. It lay in the direction he wished to go; that is to say, towards where he had left the girl.

He spurred his horse, and, as he galloped in that direction, drew his pistol, and shouted, "Hillo, there! Pull up, or I'll shoot you!"

This, at the time, partook of the nature of an empty threat, for he could see nothing: the shadow had vanished. He thought that by pretending to see whoever it was, he might frighten him, and start him from his hiding-place. Nor was he deceived. For before he had traversed half the distance, he saw a man start up and run swiftly in a diagonal direction across his track. Though he could not of course distinguish the features, he knew it was a negro by the dress—the loose pants and striped shirt, both of which he could make out in the moonlight; also that he carried a gun or musket. The object of the runaway was to gain the shelter of some thick scrub. To do this he would have to run some fifty yards, while his pursuer was only about five-and-twenty yards behind him. The fugitive ran swiftly and well.

The nature of the ground was in his favour—rugged, uneven, and marshy, so that though the galloping horse gained on him fast, he was within a few yards of the haven of safety, while his pursuer was at such a distance as to give him a good chance. The horseman was aware of this, for he suddenly reined in, and covering the man with his pistol, shouted—

"Halt—pull up instantly, or I'll shoot you!"

Then, as the negro did not obey, he fired two barrels of his revolver in rapid succession.

A cry, whether of fear or pain from a wound, broke from the runaway, who stumbled, fell, but instantly scrambled to his feet again, and disappeared in the scrub.

The horseman now thinking that further pursuit was

useless, reined in his steed, and placing his pistol back in his belt, rode slowly on, looking about him as though uncertain of his locality.

"Confound the cut-throat nigger," he muttered; "I have not only lost him, but also myself, for I certainly don't know where I am."

All at once, however, his eye seemed to fall upon familiar objects.

"Ah! that tree—of course—how green I am! It was here I left the girl Lola; and, by the way, I must go and see to her, for it's a good and faithful girl; but for her, worse might have happened to-night. Ah! poor Lola, she is too good for her station—pity she is a slave. She's certainly handsome. Handsome, I said—it doesn't half express it—the girl's as beautiful as a houri. Strange that I should never have noticed it till to-day."

Strange, indeed; and yet this might perhaps be accounted for on the supposition that Hubert Glynne was too deeply engrossed with the charms of Cassandra Vandaleur, of New York, to whom report said he was engaged, to bestow a thought on any other of the sex—least of all on a slave.

Hubert Glynne rode slowly on in the direction of the tree where he had left the girl. A reaction had supervened after the fierce excitement of the attack on the insurgent stronghold, and the young man now felt listless—almost weary.

As he approached he could discern the flutter of her white dress among the branches of the tree.

Suddenly a slight cry broke from the girl, and Hubert, starting thereat, caused his horse to swerve on one side.

"Take care—take care—you are in danger!" he heard her cry, clearly and sharply.

Unable to divine the nature of the peril, he looked around him; but could discover nothing to cause alarm.

He could not, however, see a figure crouching among the brushwood near the foot of the tree; nor did he know that the long barrel of a musket was pointed at him, and that the finger of an assassin was on the point of pressing the trigger.

Another sharp cry, followed by two reports in rapid succession. At the second, his horse plunged violently, as

a bullet grazed the animal's neck, and buried itself in the pommel of the saddle with a sharp "thud."

Instantly the crouching figure he had not seen started up, and ran rapidly away. Hubert would have pursued; but, for a moment or two, his horse, smarting with pain, was quite unmanageable. He saw the fugitive and would-be assassin strike into the swamp, and disappear, where it would have been impossible to follow.

"A narrow escape, by Jupiter!" the young planter muttered; "no doubt the same fellow whom I pursued and lost. Truly, a bloodthirsty, treacherous set, and we shall have trouble with them yet. Who knows that this question of slavery may not be the rock on which our young Confederacy may split?"

Thus thinking, he rode up under the spreading branches of the tree.

"Are you there, Lola? Come, girl, speak up!"

In a voice panting and faltering with deep emotion, she cried—

"Dear master, are you safe—unhurt? I feared I had fired too late."

"You fired? Was yours one of the shots I heard?"

"Your enemy was taking deliberate aim at you, as you rode all unconsciously on. It was the impulse of a moment. I pointed the pistol you gave me at him, and fired. I hope I have not hurt him. Great heavens! if I have mortally wounded him!"

"And if you have, Lola, it is no more than he deserves, the sneaking cowardly assassin!"

"Ah, but—he is——"

Suddenly she checked herself, and seemed greatly confused.

"Come, Lola," her young master said, "step on to the pommel of the saddle, and let us hasten home: I am getting anxious about my sister. I remember, now, I left the house without a guard."

The girl sprang lightly from the branch where she was posted on to the saddle-tree, and gathering the folds of her dress around her, Hubert placed her before him in as comfortable a position as practicable, and struck off at a sharp canter in the direction of home.

The girl was silent all the while; but her heart beat faster, and she was by no means insensible to the singular charm of the situation—half embraced by her owner's strong arm, reclining on his breast.

Thus they rode on, master and slave: she a prey to varied emotions—he scarce bestowing a thought on the lovely chattel he carried before him. At that moment to him she was but as a pet hound, or other animal, and he scarce thought of her as a beautiful woman.

CHAPTER IX.

WHAT LOLA SAW FROM HER POST IN THE TREE.

FROM her perch in the tree the girl Lola Velasco, though she could see little, could yet hear all, and was enabled to form a tolerably correct judgment of the result of the affray.

Listening breathlessly, she heard the first wild shout of the assailants, as they charged on and over the feeble breastwork; this was quickly followed by the report of fire-arms, and yells of terror, which latter she knew came from her panic-stricken fellow slaves. It would have been hard to define her feelings at that moment: though she had the deepest horror of the cold-blooded and treacherous massacre by which the revolt was to be inaugurated, she could not but in a measure sympathize with her own people—albeit that, bar the fact of her being a slave, she had no more similitude to the unfortunate dark-skinned Africans than an angel to a devil, a man to a monkey.

Still, the fact that she, in common with them, rested under the accursed ban of slavery, caused her to sympathize with, while she pitied and condemned, the ignorant negroes, who thought by a sudden burst—a saturnalia of murder and brutality—to strike off those chains, riveted, alas! too firmly, by men of superior race, superior courage, superior energy!

We have before spoken of the singular beauty of this

slave girl, but what was most remarkable was its type. The most close observer could not discover a trace of the African, either in face or form. The thin, straight nose, arched brows, good forehead, and mouth with lips full and tempting, truly, but delicately chiselled, and with no suspicion of that protuberance, perhaps the most repulsive feature in the genuine negro—these, surely, could never have been inherited from African progenitors? The very shape of the bones of the face contradicted such a supposition; it was purely Caucasian in character, and might have served as a model for a sculptor. Then let us turn to complexion; is there aught there to warrant the supposition of negro blood? Assuredly not. It is a clear light olive—fairer than that of many a Parisian I have seen, fairer than that of the majority of Spanish and Italian women; a complexion not blonde, certainly, but transparent and clear, through which, when stirred by emotions, the mantling blush of shame or indignation could be seen. And then when we look at the girl's form, is there aught therein like to that of the coarse clumsy negress? Again, no! emphatically no! Those delicate hands and arms, modelled after the antique, were certainly never inherited from African ancestors; the graceful slope of the shoulders, softly rounded bust, and lithe undulating figure, were the very opposite of the physical conformation of the swarthy slave women. And the feet, too, small, with high instep, and arched beneath, as though proudly disdaining the ground—there was nought of the clumsy flat-footed negress there.

Lastly, the hair; do we see there the betraying curl or wave which will come down from a negro ancestor through many generations?

Once more—no! The hair of the girl is dark—not black, but a deep brown—but there is no betraying wave; its rich masses are loosely bound up round her head and fastened with a silver pin, but the ends have escaped and float over her shoulders and neck. We have looked at the girl carefully from head to foot, and have sought in vain to find trace of negro origin. And yet she is a slave. Some mystery lurks here, assuredly, which may in the course of the tale be cleared up. At present, all that is known of her is that she was sent from Havannah, in Cuba, when

quite a child, for sale in New Orleans. At that date there was little or no trouble in such a transaction; the jealousy of the American Government forbade our vessels the right of search so near home as Cuba, and the consequence was that cargo after cargo of slaves from the coast of Africa were landed on the Spanish island and sold. Great numbers of these afterwards found their way to the markets of the Southern States of the Union.

Of her own early history the girl knew little, and never spoke on the subject except to her brother, the violent, revengeful Sebastian. Though she knew little she believed much; and it was with her an article of implicit faith that she was not justly a slave. Indeed, from the far away dim past there would occasionally rise up visions of her childhood, and in these visions all was brightness, happiness, and sunshine. She had occasionally faint memories of a tall, handsome man on whose knee she was nursed, and who she thought fondled and played with her as a father would a daughter. But, alas! it was but a dim memory; she could not recall where it was—nor when—nor the name of this gentleman; but, from what memories of her childhood remained to her, she felt sure that she was not reared in poverty.

Years of slavery had produced their effect on the girl's mind and disposition. She was saddened, and felt constantly humiliated. Naturally affectionate and gentle, her disposition had been soured by her condition, and it was rarely indeed the slave girl smiled.

She had fallen into good hands when she came into the possession of the Glynne family, and even with the consciousness of her bitter degradation ever before her she yet had room in her heart for gratitude to her master, Hubert Glynne, and his pretty sister Maude, to whom she was appointed as lady's maid.

Neither Maude nor her brother had ever spoken an unkind word to her, and she had been always treated with the utmost consideration. She often felt a passing pang, however, at the absent manner of Hubert in her presence. He would talk to his sister in her presence of the most private family affairs, as freely as though alone with her.

Indeed, he seemed to ignore the presence of Lola entirely,

merely speaking to her with a nod and smile when he met her; exactly, she thought, as he would have patted a spaniel.

For Maude Glynne Lola had imbibed a sincere affection. Say what one will, it is the nature of the female heart to love something—sister, sister's baby, friend, mistress, or lover! Love they must have, and the slave girl had an affection for her mistress, Maude—as pure and sincere as ever one woman bore to another.

Before this brief dissertation we were speaking of Lola's feelings, as from her post in the tree she heard the sounds of fierce combat, and knew that the wretched insurgents were served with their own measure—slaughtered and cut up unmercifully by the infuriated whites. The yells of terror and pain she heard, ever and anon, could only come from negro throats; and while panting and trembling with excitement, she listened to the distant noise of the fight, there suddenly shot up a bright pillar of flame to the sky, followed by a loud report, which caused the tree in which she was to vibrate. Then all was silent for a time. Ere long, however, she made out a figure coming swiftly and stealthily along, and she soon recognized a bleeding fugitive hurrying away from the scene of disaster.

Another and another followed, and sometimes, straining her eyes, she could distinguish who it was.

Another quarter of an hour passed, and there fell on her ears the quick sound of a galloping horse. Looking forth in that direction, she shortly discovered a human form running towards her, and it required not a second glance to convince her he was pursued by the horseman.

She heard the latter shout to the runaway to stop, and then came the sharp report of a pistol. She saw the fugitive stumble and fall, but instantly scramble to his feet and plunge into some thick brushwood, through which he swiftly made his way, and crouched down a few yards from the foot of the tree where she was. The moon shining out for a moment she could scarce repress a cry as she recognized her brother Sebastian, and a moment afterwards, looking towards the horseman, she saw that it was Hubert Glynne, riding slowly towards the tree, all unconscious of danger.

Again her eye glanced back to the crouching fugitive,

and for a moment her heart ceased to beat, as she saw he was taking deliberate aim at the advancing horseman.

She saw him examine the nipple of his musket—deliberately cock it, and then, resting it on a broken stump, aim slowly at the rider's breast. She saw his finger on the trigger—saw the deadly barrel slowly sink till he judged it was in a line with his victim's breast.

Another second, and perchance the deadly bullet would have sped with fatal effect. But, borne away by a sudden impulse, the girl gave a sharp cry of warning, which caused the man to look round, without, however, deterring him from his purpose, for he again caused his musket barrel to seek the proper level for the rider's breast.

Glynne advanced unsuspectingly, though wondering at the cry of warning.

The moon shone full upon his tall form—an opportunity which a fair shot could scarcely have missed.

Quick as thought, the girl raised and aimed the pistol she had given her.

The reports of pistol and musket were almost simultaneous, but her shot apparently took effect first—for the would-be assassin started, and so deranged his aim. Then he clapped his hand to his shoulder; and, foiled in his attempt, unknown to himself, by his own sister, ran swiftly off and escaped.

Thus it happened that, knowing who it was—her own brother, who attempted the life of Hubert Glynne, Lola felt surprised and embarrassed, and shuddered at the thought when she spoke of the possibility of her having badly wounded him.

CHAPTER X.

OLD JAKE AND THE ASSASSIN.

WHILE the stirring scenes related in these chapters were in progress, the plantation house of Hubert Glynne was all but deserted. A few old negresses who attended to the cooking, and an old negro, with head white as snow, and long past work, made up the occupants.

Stay! We had forgotten Hubert's sister, Maude Glynne, whom he reproached himself for having left so insufficiently guarded. However, he had good reason to hope and expect that the news, flying like wildfire across the country, would bring some neighbours to his house.

The flaming beacon on the hill could plainly be seen from the upper story of the house, and here were gathered the negroes, gazing in noisy terror, real or affected. When, however, the sound of the distant firing was heard, and it was apparent that the combat had commenced, there arose a prodigious clamour among these old crones.

"Massy me! ain't dis drefful?" cried one; "to tink ob de wicked black niggers a turnin' round agin dere massas, and tinkin' to hab it all dere own way? I call it rale orful. Oh, Missa Maude, won't massa work 'em up for dis?"

"Dey don't know no better; dem field hands is a drefful ignorant lot," said another, who, having been all her life one of the favoured class, "house hands," looked with disdain on her less fortunate fellow slaves who had to toil in the fields.

The sound of the explosion of gunpowder on the fall of the Fiery Cross—the screeching and howling they set up at this was of so ear-piercing a nature that Maude Glynne, despite her agitation and natural terror, ordered them all down to their own part of the house.

Scarcely had they left than they had new cause for alarm. An old man had come up from the plantation huts with the news that several niggers had come in wounded and bleeding. They were some of those who had escaped with life when surprised in the execution of their devilish plan to immolate the unhappy Lola on the signal for revolt—tie her to the burning rods forming the Fiery Cross.

Then forth they all hurried to the huts, eager for news, and chattering and lamenting the whole way.

Maude Glynne is now alone in the deserted house, with the exception of old Jake, the aged negro—infirm or partly paralyzed, who was scarcely able to crawl without assistance.

An oil lamp, swinging from the ceiling and sorely in need of trimming, cast a flickering and uncertain light in the large room, open on two sides to the night.

Seating herself on a rocking-chair on the balcony, the

young lady listened and strained her eyes for some token of how affairs were going—longing earnestly for the return of her brother and friends.

She could not tell, poor girl, how the conflict had gone, and knew but vaguely that they had ridden forth in hot haste and anger to quell an insurrection among the slaves.

That there had been a fight of some kind was evident from the sound of firing borne on the night wind, and the sudden extinguishment of the beacon, followed by the explosion. For this latter she was quite unable to account, and supposed it must have been a discharge of cannon of which the negroes had possessed themselves. This was alarming enough, but as it was not repeated, and comparative quiet reigned afterwards, she consoled herself by thinking that if it were cannon the white men had captured them. Sitting out on the balcony, with her shawl closely wrapped around her, the lamplight shining from the room within on her fair young figure rendered her conspicuous enough; but though she could be seen by any one within many yards, she herself could not penetrate the darkness, and saw not the figure of a man creeping cautiously round the fence so as to get to the rear of the house.

Apparently he was aware of this, for he came within twenty yards of the house, stopped, and gazed up at the white figure of the lady, and then, with a grind of the teeth and a muttered oath, made his way noiselessly to the back; but as he walked it might be noticed that he constantly pressed a handkerchief or cloth to his left shoulder and head. Blood flowed freely from both places. Evidently he was one of the wounded insurgents who had escaped back to the plantation.

The old white-headed negro, sitting warming his palsied limbs by the embers of the fire in that part at the rear of the house used as a kitchen, is suddenly startled by the opening of the door, and the entrance of a strange man into the place—a man whose shirt is saturated with blood, and who bears other marks of having received rough usage. The old negro, ensconced in a nook not unlike old-fashioned English chimney corners, escapes this man's observation in the dimly lighted room.

Old Jake sees this mysterious visitor pause and look

round him, and then, drawing a knife from his belt, examine it. The next moment he advances boldly to the door which opens into the passage leading to the stairs, and disappears quickly but silently.

Jack totters to his feet in confused alarm, and feebly follows him.

What can this blood-stained man with the knife want in the upper part of the house? There is only Miss Maude there.

Miss Maude—ah! Perhaps he means her harm! And the old fellow, grasping his crutch, hobbled on at his best speed, willing to lend his feeble strength for the protection of his young mistress.

Poor old soul! Long past work, there was no bitterness in slavery to him. It meant not hard toil, forced from bones and muscles which should be at rest; nor did it mean workhouse fare and misery—the unhappy pauper's meed in this so-called "merrie" England, where we boast there are no slaves, and where poor wretches die every winter from sheer *starvation* in the streets of London, the richest city in the world. Perhaps we boast a little too much.

The planter says, perhaps pointing ominously to the overseer's whip—

"Work—or I'll make you."

The wealthy in England say to the poor—

"Work, or you shall starve!" Aye, and sometimes men starve, without the option of work, to the eternal disgrace of this our boasted land. Yet, all the while, though we can look on callously at what goes on at our doors, we can get up a hypocritical whine, or howl, as the case may be, at the wickedness and inhumanity of slave-owners across the Atlantic.

That very morning Maude Glynne had brought the old man some embrocation and medicine for his rheumatics; and for many a long day he had never missed hearing some kind words in her gentle voice, and being gladdened with a smile from her fair face.

Poor old Jake! He was only a superannuated slave; but, nevertheless, he had the heart and feelings of a *man*, and grasped his crutch as tightly as his feeble clutch would allow, prepared to do battle with trembling limbs but sturdy heart for his young "missa."

Scarcely had he advanced half-way down the passage, when a shrill scream fell on his ear.

"Oh, my lor-a-goramighty, help me! it Missa Maude; and dat vagabone's a-killin' her."

Scarcely were the words out of his mouth, when the man rushed down the stairs and into the passage. For a moment he did not see the old man, who advanced incautiously, and he received from the crutch a blow which, had it been sent home with more strength, would have knocked him down and stunned him.

"You dam villin! you vagabone! What you bin a' doin'? Oh, my Lord! Oh, my——"

His words were choked in his throat by the stranger's left hand; while the right, with which he had drawn a pistol, dealt him several blows in rapid succession on the bare head. Poor old Jake sank groaning to the ground, and the other hurried away, leaving him to his fate.

The old man was badly hurt and almost stunned, and as he lay, kept murmuring,—

"Oh, my lor-a-goramighty, come and help me—no, nebber mind me—help Missa Maude—nebber mind me—Missa Maude—Missa Maude!"

The man who had forced his way into the upper room, and so savagely attacked and beaten old Jake for attempting to stop him, made good his escape, and rushing out into the open air, was soon lost in the darkness. He had not got away a moment too soon, however; for hardly had he gained the fence, about a hundred yards from the house, than he heard the sound of a horse galloping. Hastily concealing himself behind a tree, the fellow watched, and saw Hubert Glynne ride up to the gate, which he opened without dismounting, and canter on up to the house. The man's keen eyes, accustomed to the darkness, could make out who it was, and also that he carried before him on the saddle a woman. He ground his teeth, and muttered savagely—

"Ah! Miss Lola and Mr. Bully Hubert—reckon that knife stab 'll prick both of ye. He'll find he's lost his sister; and she—the forward slut—she'll see her brother hang for this night's work."

Then, with a mocking diabolical laugh, he turned, and

made his way rapidly towards the collection of negro huts, keeping close to the fence.

This man was no other than Lola's rejected suitor—now her deadly enemy—the slave who went by the appropriate name of Hyæna Jones.

While he was skulking along the fence, making for the negro village, the horseman he had heard and seen rode up to the house, passed to the rear, and dismounted, first lifting the girl to the ground. She ran in-doors, while he went round with the horse to the stable. Ere he had taken off bridle and saddle, however, a cry caused him to hurry in after her. He found her with a candle in her hand, bending over the prone body of the old nigger, Jake.

"What's this, Lola?" asked her young master.

"It's Jake, sir—poor old Jake. He seems to be ill or hurt."

"Ill! hurt! nonsense. He has taken advantage of every one being away and crawled to the spirit locker, I fancy, and got preciously drunk."

The old man heard the words.

"No, no, massa," he muttered, "ole Jake no tief—ole Jake scorn de ackshun. Ole Jake not drunk, but close on dead. Oh!" he moaned, suddenly, "for de lub of Hebben run to young Missa Maude—Missa Maude killed stone dead, sartin sure. Oh de dam villain, he go kill Missa Maude—den smash in poor ole Jake's head."

"Miss Maude—my sister—smash in your head!"

Hubert Glynne took the candle, and bending down, raised the negro's head, which was covered with blood and wounds.

"He's hurt, poor old man, and I accused him of being drunk. Lola, take his legs."

Between them they carried him into the kitchen, laid him on the table, and placed a pillow beneath his head.

"We can do nothing without a surgeon. Give him rum to revive him," Hubert said hastily; "then follow me to my sister."

A terrible foreboding oppressed him. Jake's words—his wounded, battered condition, and the silence which reigned around, all seemed to warn him that something terrible

had occurred. Taking the candle he ran up stairs, gazed around the large room, but for some little time could see nothing. The table was still covered with glasses, bottles and jugs, and plates of fruit. The chairs stood just as they had been pushed back when every one started to his feet on the alarm of the Fiery Cross. The fumes of the wine and the smell of the cigars had not yet left the room. Carrying the candle above his head, Hubert Glynne walked round the table, peering into the dark corners, and out upon the balcony, which the feeble light of one candle was insufficient to illuminate, and calling, "Maude! Maude! where are you?" walked round the long table.

Suddenly, near the end at which he himself had sat, he saw on the floor something white, and quickly advancing, and examining the object by a candle, he found it was the senseless body of a female. A second glance told him it was his sister—next, the conviction forced itself on him that she was dead—murdered; for, as he knelt by her side, he felt the pine boards were wet with blood, and the bosom of her white muslin dress stained with the same.

"Lola! Lola!" he cried, aloud; "come here, come here—quick—bring water and lights."

Lola quickly appeared, and so soon as she became awake to the terrible truth, threw herself, sobbing, by the side of her young mistress.

"Oh, Miss Maude, Miss Maude! would that I might have died for you!" she cried, passionately. Nor was there anything insincere in her words. She meant what she said thoroughly. Maude Glynne had been to her more as a sister than a mistress, and the warm-hearted slave girl—passionate and fervent in love and hate—loved her with her whole heart. Quickly she aroused herself to the necessity of exertion, aware that vain lamentations could not avail, and might waste precious time. The apparently dead body of Maude Glynne was still warm. She had brought with her a small jug of water and another candle. Placing these on the ground, she commenced searching for the wound. Alas! it was obvious enough, for, just below the first rib, between the neck and the bosom, the hilt of a knife protruded. With a cry of horror Lola drew her master's attention thereto. The hilt

was of wood, and not above two inches or two-and-a-half inches in length, giving barely room for the grasp of a man's hand. But this was no criterion of the length of the blade.

Involuntarily an answering cry broke from Hubert Glynne, as his hand felt the fatal hilt, which seemed firmly imbedded in the poor girl's delicate flesh.

Lola was now the more calm and self-possessed of the two. Quickly, but without fuss, she tore off the upper part of the wounded girl's dress, unfastened her bodice, and displayed to his view the wound where the knife had penetrated. Placing her hand on the heart, she remained motionless for a few moments, and then said, in a low tone—

"She is alive—her heart beats. The first thing to be done is to remove this knife."

"Alas! I fear she will bleed to death if we do," he said, distractedly.

"At all events, she will die if we do not," said Lola, decisively.

There was much obvious sense in this. Lola, as is often the case with women in a like emergency, seemed to have her wits about her, notwithstanding her actual grief and terror. Hubert Glynne, tremblingly and shudderingly, took hold of the wooden hilt and proceeded to draw forth the blade. It required no little strength to do so. However, he was successful in extracting it. Then followed a rush of blood, which, fortunately, did not last long, and now the wound being clear, they were enabled to take measures to staunch the bleeding and apply cordials. Water was dashed in her face, and a draught of strong whisky poured into her mouth. She breathed, gaspingly, and shuddered, but gave tokens of returning animation, which caused them to hope her life might be saved.

"We must have assistance," cried Hubert—"a surgeon. I will ring the alarm-bell; that will surely summon some one. These cursed niggers, I suppose, have all taken to the swamp, even those who did not openly join in the revolt. By Heaven! when I find the perpetrator of this desperate deed, I will hang him by the heels to a tree, cut his throat, and let him bleed to death like a calf—I will, so help me——!"

As Hubert Glynne gave vent to this dreadful threat, he looked the very incarnation of rage and revengeful hatred. That he would have fulfilled his word to the very letter there is no doubt, and Lola shuddered as she heard him; and while with one hand she wiped away the froth stained with blood which rose to her young mistress's lips, proving that her lungs were wounded, with the other she picked up the murderer's weapon. It was a very ordinary-looking knife; a straight blade, sharp on both edges towards the point, like sailors' sheath-knives, and rudely set in a common hickory handle. She gazed on it with dilating eyes and blanching lips, and suddenly dropping it from her hand, as though it burned her, gave vent to a piercing shriek, and buried her face upon Maude Glynne's breast.

CHAPTER XI.

HYÆNA JONES DENOUNCES LOLA'S BROTHER AS THE ASSASSIN.

HUBERT GLYNNE, who had just ceased ringing the bell to summon assistance, ran to her in astonishment and alarm, thinking that the bleeding had burst forth afresh, or that his sister was dead, perhaps.

"Lola, Lola, what is the matter?" he cried.

"Oh, that knife, that knife!" she cried, distractedly, amidst her sobs, and not knowing what she said.

"The knife! what of the knife?—a murderous weapon, truly. Ah! look, Maude is recovering—she opens her eyes."

He was about picking up the knife which lay at his feet, but suddenly changed his intention and fell on his knees beside his sister, who was now gazing feebly around her.

"Maude, dear Maude, you are not dangerously hurt; you are saved—friends are with you—a surgeon will be here directly."

Scarcely had he spoken than horsemen were heard rapidly approaching, and Hubert, leaving his sister to the care of Lola, went down to meet them. One he despatched

for a surgeon in all haste, the others remaining beneath the balcony. A crowd of niggers—old men and women—now poured in from the huts, attracted by the alarm-bell.

They were all in considerable terror, but curiosity proved the more powerful. Among them were actors in the attempted rising, and some who had taken a prominent part. Probably they hoped, now that the failure was certain and decisive, and punishment imminent, to escape by putting in an appearance at once, and pretending to have had no share in the revolt. Those who were badly wounded could not do so, and for the most part remained in the thick recesses of the swamp, to die, or to be hunted out by their infuriated masters, as the case might be. But there were others, who, slightly hurt, had washed, and changed their clothes, and, smarting with pain and a sense of utter defeat, hurried sulkily to the mansion. In a quarter of an hour from the time when the bell had first pealed forth its brazen summons, the rear of the house was crowded by some seventy or eighty negroes, a dozen or so of whom were able-bodied men. Among these was Hyæna Jones, who made his way silently up to the back door, and boldly entered the house. Had there now remained any spirit or spark of fight in these men they could at that moment have easily overpowered the two white men of the house, and pillaged, destroyed, and murdered at their pleasure. But they were utterly crushed; and as it was certain that, the *émeute* being over, the conquerors would soon re-assemble, there was no attempt or thought of the kind. Some of the old women who knew the house followed Hyæna Jones, and entered, as did one or two negroes who occasionally helped in-doors. In twos and threes the white men, friends of Hubert Glynnne, returned from the scene of the fight, or rather the utter rout of the insurgent blacks.

The room upstairs was soon occupied by a considerable number of people—the whites crowding around Hubert Glynnne, offering sympathy and assistance, while the slaves remained huddled together at the end of the table.

Maude Glynnne had been placed on a couch close to the balcony, and the surgeon, who had arrived, was examining and dressing the wound.

"It is not necessarily mortal," he said. "The left lung

is wounded, but unless inflammation ensues she will recover."

Hubert Glynne had gone to another part of the house to get the medicine about which the doctor inquired. During his absence, the sallow, slinking slave, Hyæna Jones, had crept quietly to the front, and stood among the white men at the head of the table. Lola was kneeling by the side of her young mistress, holding her hand, and murmuring soft words of encouragement and pity as the surgeon went on with his task. About five feet from her lay the fatal knife, on the spot where she had dropped it when she gave vent to the cry which had so alarmed her master. On this weapon the mulatto fixed his sinister gaze, and, softly touching a gentleman who stood on his right, said, in a hoarse whisper—

"See, there's the knife it was done with."

He whom he addressd did not deign to acknowledge the speech otherwise than by stepping forward and picking up the knife.

"Ha! a deadly weapon indeed—long blade, short hilt. What's this?—a name?"

While he was slowly endeavouring to decipher what was carved on the knife-handle, Hubert Glynne returned, and, placing the medicine chest on the table, advanced to the doctor and his sister. He passed close to Hyæna Jones, who slunk on one side, anxious to avoid notice. But Hubert saw him, and, turning savagely on him, struck him a heavy blow with his clenched fist.

"Dog! I saw you in the swamp, and thought I had cut you down. What are you doing here?"

The mulatto was sent staggering by the blow back among the other slaves, where he fell to the ground. He quickly picked himself up again, however, and, wiping the blood from his mouth, advanced to his master. He had so controlled his countenance as to conceal the fury and malignity which raged within him.

"Master," he said, in a whining voice, "I know I was in the swamp. I was tempted to join the rising by the hope of liberty. But I swear that I meant to warn you and Miss Maude, and prevent all outrage so far as I could. The trampled worm will turn—the kicked cur will snarl

and snap at its tormentor. What wonder that the poor slave should yield to the temptation, and, maddened by wrongs, hardships, and oppression, attempt to rise against his task-master, and throw off the yoke? But all that is over now. We have tried and failed. The white men, though few in number, have proved too powerful—too brave—too prompt in action—as the dead and wounded of our people attest. The swamps and thickets are full of poor bleeding wretches—proofs of the white man's power. The huts are crowded with others, who, well or hurt, all tremble at the thought of your just vengeance, and have no further hope of resistance or escape. As for myself"—here he bowed humbly, but not without a certain dignity—"I yield to my fate. I would have won my freedom by force—by my own right arm, aided by those of my fellow slaves. All that is past. I know now that though we, the inferior race, were doubled in number, and better armed, we yet could not prevail against our masters—our tyrants. I accept my fate; nor will I make my wretched lot worse by stubbornness or obstinacy. As a proof of my truth—that I am no cowardly murderer—I here denounce the author of this attempted assassination, which I pray Heaven may prove to have been unsuccessful."

Many of those who listened to this plausible speech were inclined to believe in it. But Hubert Glynne regarded the mulatto with suspicion and dislike. He put no faith in his protestations, but, nevertheless, felt anxious to hear whom he should denounce.

"You will denounce the author of this deed? If you do so, and your words are borne out, you shall receive pardon for the share you have had in this business. If you seek to fool me, or gain my favour by falsely accusing any one, I'll hang you, as sure as my name is Hubert Glynne!"

The mulatto turned a shade paler at the threat, and again wiping his mouth, from which the blood still trickled—the effect of Hubert's blow—he advanced a step, and raising his hand, throwing himself into a sort of attitude, he said—

"I know that knife—have seen it hundreds of times. It belongs to Sebastian Velasco, and I denounce him as the murderer!"

The gentleman who had the knife had now deciphered the letters rudely carved thereon, and, as if to corroborate the mulatto's words, read out aloud—

"Sebastian Velasco—that is the name cut on the hilt——"

Hubert Glynne seized the knife, and himself read the name.

"Sebastian Velasco!—this is his knife. He then is the attempted murderer. Let him be seized! A hundred dollars and a free pardon to the man who secures him!"

"He has just come in. I saw him enter his hut not a quarter of an hour back," said Hyæna Jones.

"Come with me, some of you fellows," said Hubert, pale with excitement at the thought of securing his sister's attempted murderer.

At this moment Lola started to her feet, and as he was about leaving, ran towards him, throwing her arms around him, cried—

"No, no—my brother—it cannot have been my brother, Sebastian!"

"Lola," said Hubert, gently disengaging her arms, "it is his knife. He is your brother, but none the less an attempted murderer."

"Oh, spare him! spare him! He is not guilty—he cannot be guilty."

"Spare him? Spare the ruffian who, in this cowardly manner, attempted to assassinate my dear sister? No; may my right hand perish if I spare him! The scoundrel shall hang as sure as fate if he cannot prove his innocence."

"Oh, mercy, master—mercy! He is not guilty—he cannot be guilty."

"Mercy! No, no mercy for murderers. Justice he shall have, and if guilty a murderer's doom."

"Justice, then!" she cried, suddenly approaching Hyæna Jones. "My brother is innocent! Behold the murderer! I denounce you, Hyæna Jones, traitor and villain, as the author of this foul deed! Seize him, in the name of justice! I say, seize him!"

She stood like an accusing angel, pointing with outstretched hand to the mulatto. A general feeling of admiration pervaded all present. The girl's great beauty,

her impassioned manner and proud attitude, all combined to impress her hearers in her favour.

"Yes—seize him!" cried Hubert Glynne; "he, the accuser, is now himself the accused. Slave! if your words concerning Sebastian Velasco are false, your life is not worth a red cent."

Two negroes, a while back the mulatto's accomplices, advanced, and, in obedience to their master's orders, seized Hyæna Jones, one on each side.

"Here you Pompey, go fetch the handcuffs. I'll have this fellow safe—I know his tricks of old."

A supply of these instruments was always kept on hand, and Hyæna Jones was quickly manacled.

"Now look after this fellow, George," said Hubert to a friend; "pistol him if he attempts to escape. I will go and fetch the other—this man Sebastian."

"Ah, master! believe me he is not guilty," cried Lola, imploringly.

"That remains to be proved, my girl. If he is innocent so much the better for him."

"Promise me that at least he shall have a fair trial."

"Trial!—a revolted slave a trial!"

"But for this murder—do not condemn him unheard, on this villain's evidence."

"He shall have a trial, Lola," replied Hubert, after considering a moment or two, "for your sake I promise that. But do not deceive yourself. If, in the opinion of his judges, he be guilty, in half an hour from the time the verdict is pronounced he shall hang from a tree by the heels, as I have sworn."

Lola bowed in meek humility, and seating herself on a low stool by the side of her mistress, commenced chafing her hands.

Hubert Glynne spoke to the surgeon, who, having administered an opiate to her, prognosticated favourably, but recommended she should be removed to bed.

"Gentlemen, if you will come below, I will order breakfast. Such of you as may wish to retire to rest for a short time can do so; we have plenty of accommodation. Now, then, you niggers, off with you—clear out. Away you go to your huts. When the bell rings, you will all assemble

in the court-yard. Justice will then be done on the guilty. Any man who neglects to come will be considered guilty, and condemned and sentenced in his absence."

Then, accompanied by two friends, Hubert Glynne strode away, bent on capturing the supposed murderer, Sebastian Velasco.

They found him in his hut, rolled up in a blanket, in one corner.

"Sebastian Velasco, come out!" said his master, raising the matting which formed the door of the hut.

A surly sound, half moan, half groan, was the only reply.

Without hesitation Hubert entered, and with his booted foot administered a kick to the prostrate form in the corner.

"Get up, you dog!" he said, savagely—his temper had not yet recovered from the excitement of the night, and the attempted murder of his sister. All the brute instincts in his nature were aroused, and he would have thought as little of shooting the poor wretch as he would of killing a dog, to which animal he compared him.

Poor wretch, indeed! Sebastian rose, or rather staggered to his feet—a pitiable object.

"Dog! Yes, that's the word for us poor devils. However, dogs can bite sometimes, as you may find yet, tyrant!" he muttered.

"None of your grumbling and growling at me. Come out!"

Sebastian obeyed, and when he issued out into the grey morning light (for dawn was now breaking), he did indeed look a miserable wretch.

He was pale as death—wet from the swamps he had passed through—his clothes torn, and stained with mud—while all one side was black with clotted gore. As he lay nuddled in his blanket, the blood had trickled on his neck and face, which presented a most ghastly sight.

"Hillo! my fine fellow, you've got grazed, it seems. Serve you right!"

Pity was dead within the breast of Hubert Glynne. He thought no more of the wounds and agony of the wounded and defeated insurgents than he would of those of a pack of wolves which had been beaten off.

"Come on, I say! You can walk, I suppose? Where are you hurt?"

"In my arm and shoulder."

"Ah! serve you right. Then, since your legs are uninjured, use them. Now, then, march on before us."

The unhappy slave, faint with pain and loss of blood, perforce obeyed, and, with unsteady staggering step and reeling brain, went on in front, inwardly cursing his tormentors with a bitter virulence which only the oppressed can feel.

"Curse them, body and soul!—may God (if there be such a thing as a God) for ever blast them to all eternity!"

Heedless of Sebastian's moans and obvious weakness, Hubert and his two friends walked leisurely on behind. Arrived at the house, Sebastian Velasco was locked up in a strong room used as a prison for refractory slaves.

The surgeon was sent to him and dressed his wounds, but, though Lola pleaded hard, she was not allowed to see her brother.

"He will be tried at twelve o'clock," said Hubert. "If he is acquitted you can see him. If he is guilty, you will never see him again alive."

"Oh! master—mercy—mercy! Remember it was I who perhaps betrayed him. It was through me he was wounded. It was I who wounded him."

Hubert paid little heed to her passionate words.

"Lola," he said, "I acknowledge the service you have rendered me—and all of us. I shall never cease to be grateful. Ask me what you please—money—your freedom—anything, and it shall be granted. But, though an angel came down from Heaven, I would not pardon the wretch who attempted to murder my innocent sister. He shall have a fair trial. If innocent, he shall not be further punished. If guilty—he dies. Go, get some rest; you must need it, my poor girl."

Lola mournfully left him, and locked herself up in the little room allotted to her.

"I will save him," she said to herself. "He could not have been guilty. I fired at him from the tree, and I believe I wounded him, in order to save my master's life. It is impossible that he could have been here in the time; or that, wounded as he was, he should have so injured old Jake. No; this is an infernal plot of that wretch Hyæna Jones."

CHAPTER XII.

THE TWO PRISONERS.

THE morning sun rose on the scene of the late attempted revolt—on the victors, still angry, but triumphant; on the vanquished, crushed in spirit, bruised and bleeding in body, but also burning with baffled hate—a wild despairing hate, which might yet have found vent in fresh efforts had the African nature been different. But to these descendants of the children of the forest and desert defeat was, as it always is, utter ruin. So far as their own efforts went, they would never rise again *en masse* till the day of doom. They had felt the lash—been forced to see their utter helplessness against the fierce, determined, and vigorous Anglo-Saxon. But though the rebellion was dead within the breasts of the slaves, there were other causes busy at work for their freedom—a freedom which was slowly and surely approaching—a freedom disastrous to the slaves, ruinous to the masters.

The haughty Southerners, brave and chivalric to a fault, and withal insolent from long wielding absolute power, refused to read the signs of the times and advance with the age. Slavery was embroidered on their proud banner, and through many bloody a fight had borne them to victory—and would again.

Slavery and States Rights! Had they blotted out the former, the latter must certainly win their independence against all the might of mongrel Yankeeland, whose armies were made up principally of German and Irish mercenaries—whose sailors were taken in a great part from the British mercantile marine.

But it was not to be so. Proud of their valour, their patriotism—relying confidently on their resolution and ability to fight it through and conquer, the high-spirited Southerners defied alike the opinion of Europe and of such Northerners who, but for slavery, would wish them well, and, perhaps, even aid their cause.

They asserted their right to govern themselves in their own way, and maintained that right with the sword, totally

unmindful of expediency and good policy. This partial and easily crushed revolt inspired the white inhabitants of Louisiana and Mississippi with yet bitterer hatred of the abolitionists, and the Yankees in whose name and cause they acted. Although the revolt had been so signally foiled, with such slaughter to the insurgents, there yet remained a feeling of alarm in the hearts of most, which made them the more relentless and determined in their resolve to keep down the nigger, and beat the accursed dollar-loving Yankee.

For an hour or so after sunrise all was quiet at the house of Hubert Glynne. Three white men remained up as sentries, silent and unseen. All the others had retired to take some rest after the terrible excitement and fatigue of that memorable night. Lola Velasco slept calmly and peacefully, as did Maude Glynne, under the influence of the powerful opiate. The doctor and an old negro woman watched by the side of her couch, each dozing alternately. Hubert Glynne slept, utterly tired out by mental and bodily exertion. All his friends slept, as did the house hands, in the building.

But Hyæna Jones, handcuffed and aching with the pain of a wound he had received, slept not, but ceaselessly paced up and down the room he was locked in, like the wild beast whose name he bore.

Nor did Sebastian Velasco sleep, poor wretch! He had lost much blood, and his broken arm gave him excruciating pain. Then he had to look forward to the prospect of a speedy and violent death. He was not so foolish as to hope for mercy, being well convinced that, if it was intended to hang him, hanged he would be, though a whole nation should pray for his pardon. As yet he knew not of the particular crime of which he was accused. He thought that he was to be tried and hanged for his participation in the revolt—perhaps for endeavouring to take his master's life.

Of the attempted murder of Maude Glynne he was ignorant; nor, to do him justice, was he capable of so base and cruel an act towards a defenceless, innocent girl, who had always stood the friend of the poor slave. No; Sebastian was remorseful when he thought of his wrongs, ever

bloodthirsty, but he had some sense of honour, and to murder one who had always been kind to and befriended him—even begged her brother to spare him punishment—to do such a deed, in order to revenge himself on his master, of *that* Sebastian Velasco was incapable. But for the pain of his wound he might have slept, for he felt no remorse at his unsuccessful attempt on the life of Hubert Glynne.

Old Jake, the negro, who, in trying to stop the ruffian who had done the deed had been so fearfully battered about the head, recovered under the care of the surgeon, and his wounds having been dressed, no ill consequence remained, save weakness from loss of blood. Of this fact Hubert Glynne took care to inform himself. He had promised Lola that her brother should have a fair trial, and he meant to keep his word. As Jake was the only person who had seen the assassin, it seemed very probable that, on his evidence, the life or death of the prisoner would depend. Shortly after dawn, and long before the household were stirring, Lola arose, refreshed by her brief sleep, and went softly to the bedside of Maud Glynne. The doctor, who had volunteered to watch, placed his fingers on his lips, in token that she still slept, and Lola stole away again. She descended to the kitchen, and drew together the embers of the fire, and made some strong coffee. She provided herself with cotton rags and an ewer of water, and cautiously stole out to the rear, where the strong rooms (as the little dark holds for separating slaves were called) were situated. There were three, so she was in doubt in which her brother was confined. Stepping lightly, she paused outside the first, and listened. She could hear the measured tread of some one pacing up and down.

"Is that you, Sebastian?" she asked.

The footsteps ceased. There was a pause, and then there came a low whisper:—

"Yes! what do you want, Lola?"

The voice was husky, and as though parched with thirst.

"I have brought you some coffee and corn-cake, and some rags and water for your wounds, in case you should require it. Also, I wish to talk to you about—about your trial, which will take place at twelve o'clock."

He seemed to think a good long time, and then said, in a guttural, choking voice—

“Ah! I can’t talk with you much—you must talk—my throat is hurt?”

“Poor fellow!” said Lola, who, now that he was in trouble and pain, forgot all his unruly savage passions, and remembered only that he was her brother. She remembered, too, that it was her hand which had sped the bullet that wounded him. She could not but reproach herself a little with this act, until she thought of her young master, whose life she had saved. Then a slight colour came to her face, and she said to herself that she could not have done otherwise. She wasted no time in thought or vain talk, but handed in the pannikin of coffee, the sweet corn-cake, and the ewer of water through the solitary hole in the strong door which admitted air—scarcely light, so small was it. She remained patiently waiting outside till he had finished, and when she heard the tin vessel set down on the solitary wooden bench she approached her head to the little wicket, and peered in. Her face closed the light still more, and she could only make out her brother’s figure in his shirt and trousers, with his head and face swathed in bandages, also the right arm.

“What, are you wounded in the face, Sebastian?” she asked.

“Yes!” he mumbled through the rags, “the face and throat are hurt.”

“And now about the trial. You know of what you are accused?”

“Yes, Miss Maude,” was the concise reply.

“And do you know what you must say?”

“No.”

“You must say you were in the swamp at the time, and, if possible, prove it; but you must say nothing about your shooting at Mr. Hubert, or that may be as bad for you as the other.”

“All right.”

“And then you must point to your broken arm, and show that it is impossible you could have come, wounded as you are, and committed the crime, and then nearly killed old Jake. Do you understand?”

"Perfectly."

"Then, as to the knife, what shall you say—it is certainly yours."

"I shall say it was stolen from me days ago!"

"Of course it was. And I know who stole it. It was that scoundrel—that bloodthirsty ruffian, Hyæna Jones, to revenge himself on me for rejecting his beastly advances. Faugh! I would prefer the loathsome animal from which he takes his name."

She paused suddenly, and asked—

"What noise is that, Sebastian, you are making?"

It sounded like the grinding and gnashing of teeth, she thought.

"Do not mind me," was the reply; "it is the pain makes me do it."

"Well, you must say it was stolen from you; you know not when or how."

"All right."

"You must own to participation in the conspiracy, but declare solemnly and truly that you had no hand in or knowledge of the attempt on Miss Maude."

"And suppose they don't believe me?"

"In that case I can prove you innocent of the cowardly attack upon her, though I shall have to show you guilty of that other attempt. Mr. Hubert will doubtless be exasperated; but I will throw myself at his feet, cling to his knees, and implore your pardon. I think when he knows that you could not have stabbed his sister he will listen to me. He is passionate, but quickly forgives an injury done or attempted to himself. Be not alarmed. Rest assured that I have the power to free you from the one horrible charge against you. Should all else fail, I will appear, demand a hearing, and speak. What, are you laughing?" she cried suddenly, in astonishment. She felt almost certain she heard a low chuckling laugh.

"No, no, it is the gurgling of the blood in my throat."

"Poor Sebastian! Would to heaven that I could aid you more effectually."

"I shall lie down now," he said. "Don't you hang about here, and above all, don't come back. I was told it would be worse for me if you attempted to communicate."

with me. So for Heaven's sake go away. One of the white men walks round the place every quarter of an hour. Go."

Utterly unsuspecting, Lola hurried away, rejoiced at the thought of having been able to take her brother some refreshment, and cheer him with hopeful words.

But scarcely had she gone than the low chuckle broke out into a devilish laugh—harsh, discordant—not unlike that of the hyæna. Perhaps it was partly on this account the inmate of the cell, to whom Lola had been talking, was called Hyæna Jones, for it was he to whom she had given the coffee and corn-cake. It was that monster of cruelty to whom she had unfolded her plan to save her brother.

He it was who stole Sebastian's knife, and, watching his opportunity, stabbed the innocent girl Maude Glynne, hoping thereby to revenge himself doubly on the beautiful slave girl who had scorned him, and the haughty slave-owner who spurned him with his foot as he would a dog.

Hyæna Jones seated himself on the wooden bench, the only thing the dark hole contained, and muttered, "Now I must think how this is to be worked. I mean to get her brother hanged and boast of it to her afterwards. How is it to be done?"

He leaned his elbows on his knees, and burying his face in his manacled hands, remained so for some moments. Then he started to his feet, and exclaiming, "I have it—I have it!" laughed the same fiendish laugh.

CHAPTER XIII.

HUBERT GLYNNE VISITS SEBASTIAN.

HUBERT GLYNNE was early about, and at once went to see to the safety of his prisoners. He boldly threw open the door of the cell, and strode in, utterly without fear of the mulatto.

"Well, you fellow; let's look at your hands." Hyæna

Jones held them forth submissively, and Hubert, after examining the manacles round the wrists, seemed satisfied.

"The girl accused you of being the murderer. I don't know whether there is ought to bring it home to you; but I tell you candidly, you sneaking cur, I want very little to hang you. I believe you've deserved the death half-a-dozen times.

"Pray don't say that, master," he replied, fawningly; "don't say that. Thank God, I never raised my hand to a woman in my life. Now, since you spoke to me candidly, I will to you, and tell you right out, that if I'd had a chance of shooting you last night I'd have done it. I would by ——!"

Hubert Glynne eyed him keenly. He was brave himself, and could appreciate outspoken bravery in another. The words did not anger him a bit—only made him feel suspicious.

"You don't usually speak so plainly," he said.

"No; but I do now, because I know it can make no difference. You mean to hang me, and you'll do it. I fought for my liberty, and would again; but as to stabbing a woman, may my soul burn in hell for ever if I could do such a thing if I tried."

Hubert Glynne seemed puzzled.

"Well, well," he said, "we shall see. If you can prove you're innocent of this particular crime, I may be induced to be merciful for the rest."

He was about leaving with these words, but Hyæna Jones addressed him earnestly.

"Look here, master. If you ain't too proud to listen, I can tell you something about this business."

"What business? The attempt on my sister?"

Hubert Glynne leaned his back against the post of the door, and lighting a cigar, said—

"Blab away, then; but don't tell any lies, or it will be worse for you."

"All right," was the cheerful reply. "Well, I'll tell you in a few words. I'm pretty close to where Sebastian is?"

"Yes; next room but one."

"Well, I can hear everything that goes on outside. About an hour ago Miss Lola, his sister, comes very quiet

and stealthy, and looks in here first. I pretend to be asleep. Then she goes to her brother's door, and I heard her call him. Presently she began talking, and I, standing close by, could hear every word she said."

"Poor girl!" thought Hubert. "It was against my orders, but I can't be angry with her.—Go on," he said aloud.

"Well, the long and the short of it is this: they talked about how he was to be got off. She asked him whether he had done it, and he would not answer; then she cried, and at last she said that any how she would save him; and from some few other words I think she means to get up a rescue. There's some of the niggers, sir, would go through fire and water for that girl. I've told you, sir, and now you can do as you like."

Hubert closed and locked the door, and walked slowly on. "The fellow speaks fairly enough," he thought. "I don't see what difference it can make to him. At any rate I will consider it. There's no harm in being prepared."

Then he went and opened the room in which Sebastian Velasco was confined.

"Now then, you fellow," was the rough greeting the prisoner heard.

"Well, what now? Are you come to torture me before you hang me, accursed tyrant?"

"No, I have come to question you."

"I sha'n't answer unless I like," was the surly reply.

"As you like. Now what do you know about this affair. Are you innocent or guilty?"

"Guilty! If my arms were bathed up to the elbows in the blood of you and yours I should call it a merit—a glorious boast!"

Hubert Glynne turned pale. This sounded like a defiant confession.

"Do you know of what you are accused?" he asked.

"Yes, d.—n you! of attempting to rid the earth of all the brood of such tyrants as yourself." Sebastian was almost delirious with pain and rage, and gave vent without restraint to his savage nature. He thought that he was doomed—that they meant to hang him, and that the trial was to be but a sham.

"You needn't trouble yourself about me," he said. "I sha'n't answer your questions, and you can hang me when you please; yet with my last breath I will curse you. I will curse you on the limits of this world and the other; and if ever I reach there, I will curse you and yours at the foot of the throne. Ah!" (here his voice hissed like that of a serpent) "would that my aim had been truer."

"Scoundrel!" cried Hubert, banging the door, and leaving him.

He thought that Sebastian alluded to the stab of the knife, while the wounded slave spoke only of when he had fired at him in the bush.

All this while he was in utter ignorance of the charge against him—knew not even that Maude Glynne had been stabbed.

Hubert went next to see to the state of the old man Jake. He found him sitting up, eating corn-cake and molasses for breakfast, so he naturally came to the conclusion that he was in a fair way of recovery. He found his sister awake, much refreshed by the sleep she had had, but still very weak, and with some symptoms of fever. Lola was sitting by her side, pale, and sad-looking. After he had spoken to his sister, Hubert Glynne beckoned the girl on one side.

"I will test the truth of what that fellow, Hyæna Jones, told me," he thought. Then aloud, when out of Maude's hearing,—

"Lola, you have been to visit your brother, contrary to orders?"

She cast down her eyes, and for a moment or two did not answer. All at once she looked him in the face and said,—

"I have. He is wounded and wretched, and he is my brother. That is the only excuse I have to make for my disobedience."

Hubert thought inwardly that the excuse was a valid one enough.

"He knows of what he is accused?"

"Yes," she replied.

"Lola, I have seen him. He is guilty."

"No! no! no!" the girl cried. "He is innocent—he must not be guilty. He must not—shall not be hanged."

"Shall not!"

"Yes, shall not, I said. I will prevent it. I will save him from so dreadful a fate."

These words of hers seemed to give some colour to the statement of Hyæna Jones. He had certainly told the truth so far as Lola's having had an interview with her brother was concerned.

Hubert Glynne resolved to be on the safe side.

"Lola," he said, "it is my wish—my command—you do not leave the house."

She bowed her head humbly, though wondering at the reason for this order.

"Very good, sir. I have no wish to leave."

Hubert Glynne went away brooding over what had occurred, and not quite satisfied in his mind with regard to Hyæna Jones and the girl.

"I will be on the safe side," he again said. "I will take efficient measures to prevent her inciting to a rescue."

CHAPTER XIV

A MOCK TRIAL.

By ten o'clock the court-yard and approaches to the house were pretty well crowded by negroes and white men, who, having heard of the affair of the night, had come to render assistance or to satisfy curiosity. Such as Hubert Glynne was acquainted with were of course invited in, whilst refreshment was provided for all who chose to partake thereof. There were the owners, overseers, and slave-drivers of many neighbouring plantations, whose slaves had levanted to join the revolt at the Fiery Cross, and had not yet returned. There were poor whites from New Orleans, glad of any job which promised dollars and whisky; and as there were hundreds of slaves to be hunted out from the swamps and thickets, it seemed likely that there would be plenty to do for the regular slave-hunters, their trained bloodhounds, and, besides, for as many others as chose to join in the chase.

Far and wide the news of the rising **had** spread, losing nothing, but gaining much, by repetition. A crowd of at least two hundred people, some on foot, others on horse-back, were collected about the court-yard of the house.

It was known that the nucleus of the rising was formed on the estate of the Glynne Brothers, and that the most desperate of the insurgents—the ringleaders in fact—were their slaves.

By ten o'clock a dozen parties of six or eight each were scouring the swamps and thickets, aided, some of them, by the keen-scented hounds. The poor wounded, frightened wretches who hid away in terror in the dark recesses of the unhealthy, damp brush, heard the hoarse baying of the hounds, the shouts of their persecutors, and, almost driven to despair, started from their lairs and ran. Usually their attempts to escape were vain. Weak, exhausted, and dispirited, they had lost all cunning, and frequently, in running from one party, would rush into the arms of another. Then, too, there were the deadly hounds. When once they had nosed out the track of the strong-smelling nigger they never lost it, but, baying deeply, ran on till they caught the human quarry, and pulled the poor **black** wretch howling and screaming to the ground.

On such occasions the runaways were always severely wounded, and would have been torn to pieces had not the whites come up and, by dint of blows, oaths, and shouts, forced the dogs to loosen their prey.

The time approached for the summary trial of such as had been singled out for punishment. First on the list were Sebastian Velasco, the supposed attempted assassin, and Hyæna Jones, whom Lola had accused. There were some dozen others to be summarily tried and as summarily punished: these were such as were proved to have been ringleaders—to have taken a prominent part in the rising—or habitual bad characters. A placard was displayed outside the court-yard gates, announcing a free pardon to all negroes who would step forward and give information as to how the plot was organized, who were the ringleaders, and who instigated it. Abolition agents of course got the blame, and probably justly so. As is often the case among men with a higher moral code ~~than~~ that of the poor nigger,

there were many only too glad to curry favour with their masters, now that they had failed, by betraying their leaders and accomplices.

A large building, some hundred yards to the rear of the house, where the cotton was housed and pressed into bales by machinery, was cleared out, and a rough table formed by laying planks on trestles. Chairs were placed around, and writing materials, and the judge's seat raised a little at the head.

Although the intended trial was not a legal one—purely an affair of Judge Lynch—Hubert Glynne seemed determined that the forms should be observed.

At twelve o'clock exactly, the first prisoner, Sebastian Velasco, was brought in, led by two white men.

Hubert Glynne hereupon rose and addressed those who were to constitute the jury.

"Gentlemen," he said, "this man is charged with the attempted murder of my sister. As I am myself concerned, I will not be on the jury; but as I have sworn an oath, I wish myself to sentence the prisoner if he is found guilty. Therefore, if no one objects, I will assume the office of judge."

No one did object, so Hubert took his place at the head of the table. As for the prisoner, he seemed stolid and sullen enough until his master mentioned that of which he was accused. "The attempted murder of Maude Glynne!" he said to himself, starting in some surprise at the accusation. Quickly, however, he recovered himself, and smiled scornfully. "Ah!" he thought, "they mean to hang me—let them accuse me of what they please."

"Prisoner, you know of what you are accused. Have you anything to say before your trial begins?"

"No," was the surly reply; "do what you like—I defy you."

"Gentlemen," said Hubert Glynne, rising and addressing the jury, "before you hear any evidence, I may tell you that this morning I had an interview with the prisoner. He boasted and gloried in his crime, which I understood him to confess. He said, with a terrible oath, that he would hold it 'not a crime but a virtue to imbrue his arms up to the elbows in the blood of me and mine.' We will

now call witnesses as to the knife which was found and other things tending to convict him.*

That the knife was the property of the accused was easily proved, nor did he attempt to deny it.

This point being settled, old Jake was confronted with the prisoner. He was very weak, and had to be accommodated with a chair.

"Now, Jake," said the judge, "look at that man."

"Yes, massa."

"Is he anything like the man who beat you about the head and escaped?"

"Yes, 'bout de same—same size—clothes same—shirt and cotton pants."

"Do you recognize his face?" asked one of the gentlemen composing the jury.

"No, massa, too dark for dat—'sides, he got it blacked an' part covered up."

"Then you could not see his face."

"No, massa, not for make sure."

"Now relate what happened."

"Dat soon done. De man, whoebber he be, come in and go upstairs quick. Den I follow him, when I hear a noise, and meet him in de passage. I hit him wid my stick, but not hard 'nuff; den he hold me wid one hand and beat me about de head wid a pistol he hab in de oder."

"With which hand did he hold you?"

"De left."

"And struck you with the other—with the right?"

"Yes, massa, wid de right—massy me! how he did hit dis poor chile!"

The prisoner, who at first had been sullen and indifferent, seemed to pay particular attention to this part of the evidence."

"It seems," he said, sharply, "that I am accused of assaulting this old man—striking him on the head with my right hand. I don't suppose it will make the least difference in the result of this mock trial; but, nevertheless, I wish to remark that my right arm is broken, and I could not raise it to save my life."

Hereupon the surgeon who had dressed his wound stepped forward.

"Yes, that is true," he said; "I feel bound to state that both bones of the prisoner's arm are shattered above the elbow by a bullet, which bullet I extracted. It would be an utter impossibility for him to have used his arm in any way whatever, after he had received the wound."

"Aye, after he had received the wound. The question is, *when* he received it. He might have been shot afterwards."

"It is not likely," remarked Hubert Glynne, "that he should have been, as all was over then. Where is the bullet? Was it a carbine, musket, or pistol ball?"

"I gave it to the girl, Lola, his sister. She was very anxious for it."

"To Lola?" said Hubert, in some surprise; and thought to himself, "What could she have wanted with it?"

A few more questions were put to the old man, but he persisted in his statement. This was the only discrepancy in the evidence, but the jury were not inclined to pay much attention thereto. Hubert Glynne was firmly convinced of the prisoner's guilt. His manner in the morning, when, on visiting him in his cell, he had, as Hubert thought, confessed and boasted of the crime, quite excluded all doubt and thought of mercy from his master's mind. He looked on him as a bloodthirsty murderous scoundrel—a constant source of danger—and as such to be hanged, as a warning to others.

Moved with these thoughts, Hubert Glynne addressed the jury:—

"Gentlemen, you have heard the evidence. It is now for the prisoner to say what he can in defence."

"I have nothing to say, except that this trial is a sham—that I am innocent of crime, and can die happy—cursing you all for a set of cowardly scoundrels."

"And that is all the defence you have to make?"

"I scorn to defend myself before you; I refuse to acknowledge your right, and defy your power!" said the prisoner, and scowled defiantly around on his jurors.

Hubert Glynne rose and addressed them.

"Gentlemen, you have heard the evidence and the prisoner's defence—or rather, his insolent speech. The knife used has been proved unquestionably to be his pro-

perty, nor has he made any attempt whatever to account for its being found where it was—stained with the blood of my sister, whom he intended to murder. The old man, Jake, cannot swear to him, but that is not remarkable, as the passage is very dark. There seems to be some confusion in the mind of this witness. He persists that the prisoner struck him with his right hand. This is impossible, except on the hypothesis that the fellow was wounded afterwards, which, however, is extremely unlikely. The probability is that, in the confusion of the sudden struggle, the old negro fancied he was struck by the villain's right hand, whereas he must have used his left. However, that point will be left for you to decide upon. In my own mind I have not the slightest doubt of the prisoner's guilt."

Hubert reseated himself, and the jurors consulted together for a few moments—a very few—and then one, who seemed to act as foreman, rose and said—

"We have come to a unanimous conclusion, and find the prisoner guilty!"

Hubert Glynne rose, and, sternly regarding the unfortunate slave, said—

"Sebastian Velasco, you have, after a fair trial, been found guilty of a cruel and cowardly attempt at murder—happily frustrated, by God's providence. I sentence you to death, which sentence will be carried out in ten minutes from this time."

He produced his watch, and laid it on the table, and then beckoned two rough-looking men of the class called mean whites.

"Have you your rope ready?" he asked.

"Yes, captain," replied one.

"All right. In ten minutes' time take him out to the big maple tree in front. I will come with you. You may as well pinion his arms at once."

"Right you are, captain."

And with these words the two men went up to the wretched condemned, and commenced binding his elbows tightly together behind him, heedless of the agony it caused his broken arm. This done, they placed the noose of the execution cord round his neck, and, coolly coiling the rest on his shoulder, stood by to wait the expiration of the ten minutes.

"Yer yellor-skinned thief, yer'd best make the most of yer time, and hurry over yer prayers. Reckon yer ain't got many minits 'fore yer choked out o' life."

Sebastian, faint with pain and not unnatural terror at his imminent fate, stood between his two executioners—pale, livid, his eyes rolling wildly, his lips moving—the picture of misery and despair.

Despite his boasting, now that his sentence was pronounced, his arms pinioned, and he felt the accursed rope, which was to strangle him out of existence, round his neck, his heart failed him, and his courage gave way. He knew that such a thing would be utterly futile, or he would have implored mercy.

Hubert Glynne, who sat at the head of the table, silently and gloomily looking at the watch which lay before him, raised his hand when the ten minutes had expired.

"Time is up. March the prisoner to execution."

Hereupon one of the two men seized either arm of the condemned, and marched him off to his doom.

The jurors arose, and slowly followed Hubert Glynne, who went out after the prisoner.

CHAPTER XV

LOLA TO THE RESCUE!

THE girl Lola remained, by Hubert's order, in attendance on her young mistress, who woke shortly after ten o'clock. She was unable to speak above a whisper, and seemed very weak, but the doctor gave a very hopeful report. Hubert questioned her as to the attack upon her, enjoining her to reply only by signs, affirmative or the reverse, to his questions. From her he gathered that she had scarcely seen her attempted assassin—that he stole up quick behind her, and the very moment she turned her head on hearing him, he stabbed her over the shoulder and vanished. She was quite unable to identify him, or even give any description whatever of his appearance.

Lola noticed that her master watched her very closely, and wondered somewhat thereat. Several times during the

morning her eyes met his cast upon her. On such occasions she would colour up to the temples, and move from where she sat or stood.

"What could be the meaning of that strange look?" she asked herself. Did he suspect her? Ah! the thought was bitter indeed, and tears rose to her eyes when it presented itself. Surely, she said to herself, she had given proof enough of her devotion. Was it not enough to hear that her brother Sebastian was accused unjustly of this crime? That she should be suspected by him for whom she had done much—for whom she had risked her life, and would again, freely, unhesitatingly—that was indeed bitter.

She tried to persuade herself that it was her fancy, but in vain.

Maude Glynne, after partaking of a little refreshment, again sank into a quiet sleep. Still, Hubert did not leave the room, but moved about, occasionally going out on the balcony, and shouting out orders, or speaking to his friends.

Lola felt quite sure that he was watching her. Even when he went out on the balcony, and appeared to seat himself carelessly, he always did so in such a position that her could see her. Once or twice she moved away out of sight. On each of these occasions he called her sharply, and asked for a light, a cup of coffee, wine, cigars—evidently, she thought, as an excuse to make certain she did not leave the room, for she could get all these things from the sideboard, except the coffee, and that he countermanded—hastily.

She was watched.

Her pride revolted at this, and, slave as she was, she felt herself bitterly wronged. She felt this evidence of her master's suspicion more keenly than she did her abject position as his slave. When convinced that he was watching her, she did not attempt to leave his sight, but, with proud scorn, refrained from looking at him, silently doing all he bade her.

At eleven o'clock he called her to him on the verandah. For a moment or two he gazed hard at her, as if seeking to read her thoughts. She stood before him with cast-down eyes—pale, sorrowful, but without flinching.

"Lola," he said, "I wish you to go to the store-room."

"The store-room—yes. What am I to do?"

"Ah! well—you are to—that is to say—yes. I mean you are to clear everything out of the cupboards; I want to use the room for another purpose."

Lola wondered much at this, for Hubert had never before interfered in the household arrangements, but had always left that to Maude and herself. The store-room was situated at the further corner of the building. It was a small room, with a strong door, and but one little window, which was so high as to be only reached by standing on a stool.

However, she said nothing, but went on her errand. In another hour her brother's trial was to come on. There would be ample time before that to empty all the cupboards, and range the contents on the floor. She hoped that he might be acquitted of the dreadful charge against him, without the necessity of her accusing him of another though lesser crime; but she determined to be present, and, if it should go against him, to tell all she knew, and appeal to the justice and mercy of her master.

At this time, though there was noise in abundance without the house, and in the lower rooms—where Hubert had caused refreshments to be provided for all who came—there was complete silence in the first or principal story. On account of the wounded young lady, this part of the house was silent and deserted; only Hubert, the doctor, Lola, and a negress who cleaned the rooms, being allowed access.

Lola had got through about half of her task when she fancied she heard a footstep, then a slight clinking noise. However, she paid no attention, and having cleared the cupboards and ranged their contents on the floor, she prepared to return to Miss Maude.

To her great surprise the door was locked. At first she thought she must be mistaken—that it had caught, or something of that kind; but examination quickly convinced her that she was locked in.

"One of those stupid women, Deborah or Chloe, must have done it by mistake," she said; and forthwith commenced rattling loudly at the handle, for she heard a small

clock in an adjoining room sound the mid-day hour. She called aloud, but no answer came. She placed her ear to the door and listened. A silence as of the grave prevailed, and she could even hear the ticking of the clock. Then she went to the window, and standing on a chair, opened it. She heard then an indistinct murmur, and the tramping of feet, as of people going or coming. Looking further, she could see one or two white men sauntering round the angle of the house towards the rear. The balcony, and the small size of the window, prevented her from seeing anything but a very small space.

Descending from her post on the chair, she thought for a moment or two, and then, like a flash, the truth burst in upon her.

Yes! she understood all now. Hubert Glynne's suspicious watching—his sending her on this apparently need-less errand at such a time, immediately before the trial.

He had locked her in!—purposely, without doubt.

She threw herself on the floor, and gave way to her grief in a burst of tears. She had never been so treated before. Indeed, but for the crushing consciousness of her serfdom, she had been a slave but in name. Her young mistress had made a companion of her—had talked to her, and laughed with her, as she would have done with a sister—had trusted her, utterly and entirely. Lola had been virtually housekeeper, as Miss Maude gave her the keys of everything, and she had only to say that any article was needed, immediately to obtain it.

What had she done to be thus treated? she passionately asked herself amidst her tears. Why was she treated like a criminal? Had she not shown her devotion to her master and mistress by conveying to them a warning which probably saved their lives? And this was her reward—when her brother's fate hung in the balance, to be thus cooped up like a thief!

Vain was her grief—vain her tears, and vain, too, were her cries and entreaties to be released. Probably no one heard her, or Hubert Glynne had given orders that no notice should be taken.

Now, for the first time, she felt her degradation. The *used thought* that she was a slave had been sufficient

to render sad and melancholy an originally joyous, impulsive nature. Now she felt the cold grip of the manacles, and realized in all its nakedness the fact that she was a slave.

Presently she aroused herself from the passion of grief and despair into which she had fallen. It was, she knew, nearly a half-hour past twelve o'clock, and by this time the trial of her brother might be nearly or quite concluded.

Supposing he were found guilty—horrible thought!—she knew enough of the relentless promptitude with which, in such a case, the sentence of Judge Lynch would be carried into effect.

She again examined the door—shook it—thumped against it, and cried out at the top of her voice. But all in vain. Being the store-room, it had been purposely made very secure, to guard against the thievish propensities of the negro servants. Then she went back to the window. It was small and narrow, but she could get her head and shoulders through. Gazing wildly out, she saw several men hurrying across the small space of ground she could command a view of. They were all going in the same direction. Then there followed some coloured men, who, by their looks, appeared frightened, awe-stricken, and followed timidly, as though afraid, and yet drawn on by an irresistible attraction.

Presently she saw old Chloe, who officiated as cook in the establishment. She called to her as loudly as she could, and the old negress, after gazing about in stupid wonder, at last discerned her at the window.

"Hallo! dat you, Miss Lola?" (they always called her Miss Lola.) "What you doin' up dere?"

"I am locked in, Chloe, by accident—only by accident. Come and let me out directly."

"Can't do it, missa."

"Can't do it? Why not?"

"Massa Hubert got de key. See him swingin' de bunch in him hand only minit or two back."

"Where is our master? Run to him. Tell him I must see him—that I have something most important to communicate. Run quick, good Chloe—do!"

"Massa's gone on wid de rest, de jury an' all ob 'em.

Ise 'fraid to go. Oh, dear—oh, dear—dis drefful 'bellion. What for dey do it, to get shooted an' cut wid swords, an' p'raps hanged, like poor Sebastian?"

"Sebastian—hanged! God of Heaven! What do you mean? He has not been tried."

"Yes, missa," the old woman blubbered, "an' dey're al' gone togedder to hang him up to de big maple tree."

A piercing shriek burst from poor Lola, and she almost fell from her chair. But her self-possession did not forsake her. Her courage rose with the occasion. She remembered that if she could get her head and shoulders through the window it was possible to pass out. Reckless of what happened to herself, heedless of a probable fall, she snatched up a piece of string, and fastened her clothes tightly together at the ankles; then she got up on the chair, and nerved by desperation she swung her body up by laying hold of a peg in the wall, and passed through the window feet foremost. She knew that the roof of the balcony was beneath her, and without a moment's hesitation let go her hold and dropped. She fell on the top of the verandah, as she expected, and narrowly escaped rolling right off on to the ground at once—a fall of some twenty-five feet, which would probably have killed her.

Undeterred by the screams of Old Chloe, who witnessed this *escapade*, she crawled along till she came to one of the pillars; then she let her legs down, and having secured a hold for her hands, commenced to descend. The supports were covered with creeping plants—wild briars among others—which tore and lacerated her delicate skin in a most painful manner. Careless of this, she made her way, and soon landed on the balcony itself. To run down to the basement and out to the front was but the work of a moment.

"Where are they? whither have they gone?" she asked breathlessly of Chloe.

"Oh, my lor-a-massy! you frighten dis chile's soul out! Yonder dey is—see de whole clump ob 'em under de maple tree!"

Without waiting to hear another word, Lola started off at a run, regardless of her torn, disordered dress and hair and bleeding hands. Breathless she arrived, and bursting

through the circle of spectators gathered to witness the dreadful tragedy, she rushed up to Hubert Glynne, whose tall, commanding figure she quickly singled out.

"Master, master! what are you about to do? It is murder—murder!"

"No, Lola, it is not murder. We are about to inflict just punishment on an attempted murderer—the would-be assassin of my sister."

"No, no!" she screamed, clasping her hands, her whole frame trembling with excitement; "it is not so; he is innocent—innocent—innocent!"

All eyes were now turned on the beautiful slave girl pleading for her brother's life. Even the most hardened and exasperated among the whites assembled gazed with pity on this lovely woman—eloquent and impassioned in her sorrow—as she begged, prayed, and implored. Few of them could boast of wife or sister as fair, as beautiful, as delicate as Lola Velasco, slave though she was. She poured forth a torrent of words; but Hubert, who had sworn that the scoundrel who attempted his sister's life should die, steeled his heart against her.

"It is useless, Lola," he said, firmly and deliberately. "I locked you in to avoid this painful scene. You have no business here. Go, and pray for mercy for your brother's soul—there is none for him on earth. He has been tried and sentenced, and shall die the death of a murderer."

Lola gazed frantically around, and her eye fell on her brother, pale and ghastly, with the fatal rope round his neck, standing beneath the very branch on which he was to be hanged. Already one of the executioners had climbed the tree, and was passing one end of the rope over the limb.

She started forward, and stood in the centre of the circle—pale as death, trembling, but looking like an inspired prophetess.

"White men!" she cried, "I appeal to your manhood, and though I be a slave—a wretched chattel—owned by yonder man, whose life I have twice saved at the peril of my own—a man whose heart God has hardened—who has no mercy, no gratitude, no justice—I, his slave, appeal to you, and say, *hear me!*"

As she spoke her voice rose on the air clear and piercing

as a clarion. Spite of themselves, their caste, their pride, their prejudices, the white men felt a thrill of admiration and pity at this most impressive appeal.

Hubert Glynne coloured with shame and anger when he heard himself branded as unjust, ungrateful, and unmerciful. For a second, harsh thoughts prevailed in his breast, but his nobler nature conquered. He remembered that the girl was pleading for her brother, and was magnanimous enough to honour her for it. He remembered, too, that she had done him good service, at what fearful risk to herself the all but accomplished death she was doomed to, and from which he was just in time to save her, bore witness.

Twice she had saved his life? Twice? When was the second time? Ha! he remembered now—her pistol shot from the tree which deranged the aim of the lurking assassin. So, bearing all this in mind, he was silent.

“Hear her—hear her!”

“Aye, let’s hear what the girl’s got to say.”

“Let her speak. We can hang him afterwards, if we please.”

These and other murmurs to the same effect served to inform Lola that she had gained at least a hearing. So, after pausing a moment or so to recover breath and arrange her thoughts, she spoke, slowly, but with deep and intense passion breathed in every accent.

“White men, I, a poor slave girl, appeal to you on behalf of my brother—not for mercy, but for justice.”

“And, by snakes and thunder! you shall have it, my girl,” cried one, more enthusiastic than the rest. “I’m a Louisiana man, but my father was an Englishman, and his motto was fair play, and fair play you shall have, or I’m d—d if I don’t know the reason why!”

The speaker, a tall, brawny young man, glared defiance around, and seemed prepared to champion her on the spot.

Lola went on with her speech.

“I will prove my brother innocent of the crime of which he is accused—prove that it is impossible he could have committed it—prove that he was at the time more than two miles away. Will that suffice? If I can do this shall his life be spared?”

Turning as she spoke, she gazed on the faces of all

assembled, till her eye rested where it was at first, on her master, Hubert Glynne. A murmur ran round again—

"Yes, yes; if you can prove him innocent, he ought not to be hanged."

"Yes, yes; do what you say."

"The girl speaks fairly enough; let's hear her out."

"Aye," she replied, pointing her finger at Hubert, all the time regarding him scornfully; "but it rests with this man—my—master."

The words came from her slowly, one by one, and the word "master" was uttered in a tone which caused a feeling of anger to arise in the breast of Hubert Glynne.

It seemed as though he were despised by his own slave.

Mastering his feelings, he replied, quietly—

"If you can do what you say, Lola, your brother will not be hanged."

"Not even though, in proving him innocent of this crime, I have to convict him of another?"

"No."

"Not though I have to prove that he attempted your own life?"

"That I will freely forgive," replied Hubert, generously "Prove him innocent of the diabolical attempt on my sister, and, so far as I am concerned, he can go back to his hut."

Lola's manner softened instantly, and a beam of pleasure—of admiration—at her master's magnanimity in face of the taunts she had flung upon him—came over her face.

"Then my task is easy. Listen, all, how I prove that he could not have committed the crime of which he is accused. Is the doctor here?"

"Here am I," replied that gentleman, stepping forward.

"Is this the bullet you extracted from my brother's arm?"

"It is. I recognize it by a dent in it—a strip of lead torn off, I imagine, when it struck the bone."

"Good. Hubert Glynne, is not this one of your own pistol bullets?"

"It appears to be so," he said, after examining it. "I mould them myself, and there is a mark in the mould by which I can recognize them."

"That is well. Do you remember last night placing me in a tree for safety, and there leaving me?"

"I do."

"And do you remember on your return that you chased a fugitive—fired at him, and then lost him in the scrub close to the tree where I was concealed?"

"I do."

"Do you remember that as you approached I uttered a cry of warning, and that immediately there were two reports—a pistol and a musket being fired almost simultaneously."

"Yes, I remember all this. The bullet of the man who fired at me struck my saddle, but did not injure me. But does this bear on the present case?"

"I will tell you. I saw the man whom you pursued conceal himself behind a bush close to where I was. I saw him take aim at you. I saw his deadly barrel levelled at your heart. I cried to warn you. It seemed too late; and then, in my earnest desire to save your life, I forgot the instincts of nature—the ties of blood—and fired at the crouching man. That man was my brother."

When the girl concluded there arose a shout of astonishment—of satisfaction; for every one present was impressed with the girl's beauty—her passionate pleading, and her clear convincing voice. Not one doubted the truth of what she said.

"That bullet, extracted by the surgeon, was fired from your own pistol—the one you gave me to defend myself with when you left me in the tree. What I say is true, so help me Heaven. Speak, Hubert Glynne; acknowledge that it is impossible that my brother should have committed the crime."

He considered for a moment or two, and then spoke—

"Gentlemen, all what the girl says is true. A few moments after the two shots had been fired, I took her before me on the saddle and rode home at a hard gallop. When I arrived here the deed had already been committed some time. It is impossible that Sebastian Velasco could have committed this crime."

Then there arose a shout of congratulation. The girl's eloquence and magnificent appearance had fascinated all

and they hailed her success as a triumph. The men who, a few minutes before, were eager for his life, now busied themselves in removing the rope from his neck and unbinding his arms.

"Stay!" cried Lola, urged by a sudden impulse; "it yet rests with our *master*." (How bitter was the emphasis she laid on the word!) "Hubert Glynne, you have still the power, perhaps the right, to hang him for his attempt on *your* life—say the word."

"Lola," he replied, "that taunt is undeserved. You accused me just now of being unmerciful, unjust. I have never been so to you. At least I am a man of my word—a Southern gentleman. Release Sebastian Velasco! Doctor, see that his wound receives every attention. Sebastian Velasco, I pardon you your attempt on my life—freely, and from my heart, and that all may see. I fear you not; you shall reside in the house until you are well. Murder me in my sleep if you will—again I say, I fear you not."

"Hubert Glynne, you are my master, my tyrant," said the slave, in a husky voice, "but may my right hand wither—may the gates of Heaven be for ever closed against me—if ever I raise a hand against you or yours!"

Hubert Glynne turned proudly, scornfully away, as though he cared neither one way nor the other what the slave said or did. But Lola, over whose soul had come a sudden and great revulsion of feeling, rushed after him. Throwing herself on her knees at his feet, she clasped his hand and kissed it.

"Master, forgive me; I spoke harshly—unkindly—unjustly. You are all that is good and noble; I honour you. Were you not my master, I could——"

She checked herself suddenly. What was she about to say? Whatever it might have been, it remained unspoken. She blushed, and rose in confusion.

"Lola," he said, "you are a good girl. Your devotion to your brother does you honour. Go and tend him, and urge him for the future to curb his unruly passions. I have much to thank you for. I owe you my life. Deem me not ungrateful, for I am not so. If ever you have a request to make, come to me, and if it be one I can grant,

fear not a refusal—no, not though you were to ask your freedom.”

At that moment a young man pushed out from among the crowd—a dark, handsome, slightly-built young man.

“By Jove! you’re a splendid girl,” he said—“a noble and brave girl! Sir, I have this morning come from New Orleans to make your acquaintance. Let us begin by a deal. I am an Englishman, and, on principle, opposed to slavery, but I’ll give you two thousand dollars for that girl—I will, by heavens! and the next minute give her her freedom. I’m not a rich man, but that’s a luxury I will indulge in.”

The girl bestowed on him a grateful look; Hubert, a cold displeased one.

“Sir,” he said, “I am not in the habit of disposing of my servants to strangers. I would have you know I am no slave-dealer.”

“Your pardon, sir: no offence was meant. It’s very seldom, I am afraid, I do a good action, and at this moment I feel inclined. However, if you won’t, you won’t.”

“You say you have come to make my acquaintance?”

“Yes; I have a letter of introduction from an old friend of yours.”

“His name?”

“Gerald Leigh—and me they call Captain George.”

“Gerald Leigh—dear old Gerald! Sir, I bid you welcome. Make my house your home. Where is Gerald?”

“In South Carolina, with his regiment.”

“Come up to the house—we will drink his health together. I have heard of you. He has mentioned you many times in his letters. So you are the Englishman—the mad Englishman, he called you once—Captain George?”

“At your service, sir—mad or sane!” said our English friend, laughing.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE END OF THE NEGRO RISING.

ON their way back Lola learned the all but fatal mistake she had made. When she asked Sebastian whether he had done as she had told him, pleaded that the knife was stolen from him and at the time he was far away, he seemed not to understand her, and she thought at first that he was faint and dizzy—his mind disorganized by the terrible ordeal through which he had passed. But by degrees she learned the truth—that he had not had any communication with her—that he did not even know, until dragged in to be tried, of what he was accused.

Then, like a flash, the truth burst upon her; she remembered the peculiarity in voice, the stifled laugh, and other little circumstances.

She had bestowed her confidence on her most deadly enemy—Hyæna Jones. This wretch had all but triumphed. It seemed as though nothing but God's providence had saved Sebastian from the shameful death to which he had been sentenced.

There were several other niggers besides Hyæna Jones waiting for punishment to be awarded them. These men had been caught lurking in the swamps by the white scouts, and were brought in, wet, muddy, torn by the dogs, and altogether pitiable objects. No pretence was made of a trial, but they were had up and sentenced to double labour, black hole, short commons, or flogging, as the case might be; in some instances to all. As for Hyæna Jones, there was no evidence to connect him with the crime of which Lola had so rashly accused him—rashly, because the wily scoundrel had so well managed that there was not anything whatever except her word to convict him. Hubert Glynn regarded him suspiciously—he scarce knew why—but ordered him to be released, and return to his work. The mulatto thanked his master with an oily smile on his yellow face, and then, snake-like, glided away. He knew of the failure of his scheme, and ground his teeth with disappointed malice.

“No matter!” he said to himself, “I ain’t done with the

shut yet. Curse her! I'll have a bitter revenge on her. Said she'd prefer the loathsome beast from which I get my name, did she? Reckon when I do get hold o' her to-rights, she might just as well ask mercy from that amiable animal."

And, grinning at his own devilish pleasantry, Hyæna Jones made his way back to his hut.

Now that the immediate danger and excitement of the rising was over, the whites, who had been alarmed and exasperated, had time and opportunity to consider the question in all its bearings. It was almost unanimously agreed by the Southern gentlemen assembled at the house of Hubert Glynne, that there was no danger to the cause for which they fought from this or any other attempted rising. It was believed to have been an isolated affair, confined to a few miles up and down the Mississippi shore or embankment, fomented by sneaking abolition agents, who had come up the river under cover of the Yankee fleet, now only some hundred miles below New Orleans. The revolt, though it might have resulted in many cases of murder, arson, pillage, and other atrocities, on isolated plantations, could never have made head for a week against the overwhelming force of well-armed white men that could be brought against them. The proof of this was the ease with which the encampment or entrenchment was captured. Doubtless, had the Fiery Cross been permitted to burn all night, some hundreds more negroes would have joined; houses would have been attacked, and unutterable ferocities perpetrated on the weak or defenceless. But the end must have been the same—defeat and disaster to the slaves.

Though it was decided there was no danger to the Confederacy or the State from this revolt, and little fear of its being repeated, individually the planters around were uneasy, restless, suspicious, and exasperated. None liked to leave their wives, sisters or children on their estates. The diabolical attempt on Maude Glynne showed that the wretches would not hesitate to murder women in order to gratify their revenge.

A strict system was established, by which every slave was forbidden to leave the plantation without permission

and was compelled to report himself twice in the day, and at night at ten o'clock. All day long the hunt for runaway slaves was kept up, and many a poor bleeding wretch was dragged from the damp recesses of the swamp, and brought trembling before the angry whites. Some of the worst were tied up and unmercifully flogged, and others were sent to New Orleans to prison; but the greater number were sent back to work, the overseers and drivers being instructed to keep them hard at it, and not spare the lash. Thus, for the present, this mad attempt of the Louisiana slaves ended only in their own discomfiture, and an increase in the hardships and miseries which urged them to revolt.

Maude Glynne, the doctor said, was in a fair way of recovery, no unfavourable symptoms having manifested themselves. Hubert had made up his mind, as soon as she should be in a fit condition, to leave the plantation, and come down to New Orleans. For himself he did not fear, but as he would probably be away at the wars, he resolved not to leave her alone on the estate, exposed to the danger of another attempt on her life. The doctor was of opinion that in a week's time she would be in a condition to be moved, and in anticipation Hubert Glynne made all necessary preparations.

CHAPTER XVII.

A BARGAIN.

ON the following evening to the one of the trial from which Sebastian Velasco so narrowly escaped with his life, Hubert Glynne and the Englishman, Captain George, may be seen seated together on the balcony of the house. On a small table between them is a box of cigars, a spirit case, and a bottle of iced wine.

"Hitherto," said Hubert Glynne, "I have had no time to talk to you about Gerald Leigh and all friends in South Carolina."

"Gerald is well, but he has not yet recovered his spirits.

He took the death of his brother Darcy very much to heart."

"Darcy Leigh!—ah, I remember hearing of his exploits. Was it not he who ran away with Uncle Sam's sloop, the *Spitfire*, re-christened her the *Black Angel*, and played old Harry with the Yankee merchant shipping?"

"Yes, it was a splendid achievement, but that formed only a small part of his services. He was as brave and dashing an infantry officer as he was a gallant and skilful sailor."

"Ah, my boys," said Hubert, "with such a brave boy at heart as Darcy Leigh to cheer on our men, the cursed dollar-loving Yankees can never hope to beat us."

"Ay, if you could ensure a constant succession of such men; but suppose that in the course of the war the great majority of your best officers share the fate of Darcy Leigh, and are killed in battle, dying gloriously, but depriving the country of their services?"

"We shall never want officers," said Hubert, "never! You forget the young men growing up, all burning with ardour to draw their maiden swords in the service of our young Confederacy. Did you not say," he asked, changing the conversation, "that you were in the same cavalry regiment as Gerald Leigh?"

"Yes; I left it on account of a quarrel I had with the colonel. You see, I could not well call him out so long as I commanded a troop under him."

"No, no, of course not. What was the row about?"

"He insulted a young lady, a friend of mine—one in whom I took a deep interest."

"Ah! how came he to do that?" pursued Hubert, lazily puffing at his cigar.

"Well, the fact is, the young lady in question had been a slave. It turned out, however, that she was the half-sister of Miss St. Casse—of whom everybody has heard, I suppose."

"Oh, yes—the beautiful Creole heiress, whom they christened the 'Star of the South,' I believe. She was shot, was she not, in trying to carry a warning to some of our fellows who were in danger? I never heard the rights of it."

"She was brutally murdered by the Yankees. It is too long a tale now. I will tell you all about it another time. Well, this young lady, Nina, to whom Miss St. Casse had left a great part of her fortune, took the name and was universal^{ly} admitted to society on equal terms. This colonel, however, thought fit to press his attentions on her. She was, as you may have heard, a very beautiful girl. Anyhow, she did not wish for the colonel's attentions, and told him so. He would not take no for an answer, but, I fancy, flushed by wine, pressed his suit with more ardour than delicacy. The young lady repulsed him with scorn. At this he lost his temper, and grossly insulted her. I was in the drawing-room of an hotel, and passing the door I heard what passed. The same day I resigned my commission, and called the colonel to account. I insisted on his apologizing to the young lady. He replied, insolently, that he wouldn't apologize to any old nigger wench at the bidding of a cursed Britisher. Thereupon I struck him. We fought next day on the sands, a mile from Fort Moultrie."

"Well, and the result?" asked Hubert.

"I shot him through the head at the first fire," replied the Englishman, coolly. "It was a near shave. He was a good shot, and his bullet actually grazed my cheek. So you see, here I am, a gentleman at large—a soldier of fortune without a flag to serve under."

"You needn't let that trouble you, my boy. Tell you, what, I'm raising a regiment of horse artillery; you've been in the cavalry—perhaps you'd like to join—the light gun drill is very quickly learned. You can have a gun as soon as you're posted up."

"With all my heart. I know something of the drill, and will soon perfect myself therein. By the way, I've got two faithful fellows with me I shouldn't like to part with. One's an Irishman, the other a nigger—a free nigger."

"A free nigger, eh? Well, I can't say we're fond of free niggers; but still, if you want them—will they volunteer?"

"Bless your soul, yes—they'd volunteer to go the devil with me, either of them. They were greatly attached to

poor Darcy Leigh. Before he died, it seems that he commended them to me. Poor devils, their grief was genuine indeed. I gladly accepted the trust, and here I am, with two hulking body servants, an Irishman and a nigger. As to what you say about his being free being an objection, we can soon alleviate that. We'll have 'em up if you have no objection. I think they'll amuse you."

Thereupon Captain George produced a small silver whistle and blew thereon a peculiar call. In a minute or two Chloe, one of the house hands, made her appearance.

"Say, massa, here's two audacious fellows—a nigger and a Irisher, as wants to come up—say their massa's bin a callin' 'em. O my! hyar dey come."

"Out o' de way, you old rag-bag—bad luck to yer rattling bones! and lit an Irish gentleman and his attendant come by. Where's the mather?"

"Imperent fellow," muttered Chloe; how dar' you sar? Don't touch me—I'se a 'spectable house hand."

Darby Kelly, a big Irishman, six feet two inches in his stockings, here tumbled into the room, followed by a negro as black as ebony, and nearly as big as himself.

"Behold my body-guard, Mr. Glynne!" said the Englishman, smiling. "Jupiter—Darby, make your obedience to my friend, Mr. Glynne."

"Your sarvant, sir," said Darby Kelly, making an awkward attempt at a bow.

"How you do, massa? Dis chile salute you, massa, with ebbery token ob' respec'."

Jupiter was much more elaborate in his bow, which he repeated several times.

"Houd yerself up straight, you bobbing mandarin. Shure, his honner don't want to see yer black skull bobbin' up and down that way. 'Tention!"

Hereupon Jupiter brought his arms down with a slap by his side, and stood in the required position.

Darby Kelly, who had been a sergeant, had bestowed enormous trouble in teaching his black friend his drill, and by dint of many thumps, kicks, and boundless abuse, had hammered it into his thick head.

"Jupiter—Darby," said Captain George, addressing his two followers, "I'm going to join an artillery corps, being raised by my friend Mr. Glynne."

"Bully for you, captain," said the Irishman. "Jabers, I'm wid ye there! Hoost, bang! This is the boy for cannoneering!"

"Yes, yes, Darby; I've no doubt you're a first-rate gunner—none whatever. But what about you, Jupiter?"

"Oh! I'se all right, massa. I kin shoot beautiful."

"The devil you can! We've only your word for that."

"Dat's orright, tell 'ee, massa. You jis put de cannon straight—dis chicken 'll bang him off right slick—dis hyar nigger ain't afraid."

"Afraid—no; but there's a difficulty in the way. In this regiment free niggers are not admitted."

"De debbil! dat's a drawback, ain't it?"

"It certainly is, Jupiter. "I'm afraid we shall have to leave you behind."

"No, I'm dam if you do, massa—dis chile's a goin' to follow you to de field ob glory."

"Can't be done, Jupiter—can't be done at any price. Folks don't like free niggers down here."

"Wall, now, look **here**, massa—dis business must be settle some way. Dere's an objection cos dis chile's a free nigger?"

"Exactly so—a fatal objection."

"Well, den, the free nigger, Jupiter, will unfree hisself—dat's simple enough."

"Unfree yourself! How do you mean?"

"Wall, look hyar, now, I'll ask dis gentleman. Now, you sir, how much is I worth! Look! hyar's arms, hyar's muscle—ain't I honest worth a thousand dollars?"

Jupiter advanced to Hubert Glynne as he spoke, and baring his brawny black arm, displayed the muscle with great pride.

"Say, now, ain't dat flesh good for a thousand dollars?"

"Well, yes," said Hubert, smiling. "If I wanted a nigger, I'd give a thousand dollars to you."

"Wall, look hyar, Massa Cap'n George. I settle dis business right sharp. I sell myself to you for five hundred dollars, an' de Irisher an' me 'll divide de money. Reckon we can put it about in two or three days, eh, Massa Darby? You give me five hundred dollars, massa, and two or tree day to go down to Orleans and spend it, den it's all right. What say you?"

"Can't be done, Jupiter? I'm an Englishman, and it's against my principles to own a slave."

"Oh, curse de principles! If I don't care, don't see why you need worrit about it, nohow."

"Can't be done," said Captain George.

"Wall, now, look hyar, massa," said Jupiter, severely, "dis is a serious matter, an' it's got to be settled right off. You're cleverer nor me—how's it to be done?"

"Well, you see, Jupiter, I can't buy you myself, because it's against my principles, but if you're determined to unfree yourself, as you call it, I dare say we can manage it. Darby Kelly, have you got any scruples about slaves?"

"Is it me have scruples? Be Jabers! I'll have no scruples in batin' a dozen of the black varmintes."

"Well, would you like to buy Jupiter?"

"Buy Jupiter! Oh, by de holy poker—but that's a rum go. What the devil would I be afther doin' wid de cratur?"

"Well, you know," Captain George said, slyly, "if he belonged to you, you know, you could thrash him whenever you liked."

"Be Jabers, there's somethin' in that."

"Yes."

"I'd buy the black cuss, but I ain't got the money."

"Oh, never mind that; I'll lend you some money."

"An' is it sell myself to de Irish? Oh, my Gor A'mighty, ain't it degradation!"

"Well, just as you like, Jupiter, only you can't come with me free."

"Orright, massa; I'll sell myself to de Irish, an' all I've got to say is dis—I hope he'll like his bargain; reckon when he's got this chile he'll have a tame alligator subject to fite about him."

"Here you are, Darby, here's a hundred dollars; if Jupiter takes that for his black carcass, you buy him right out."

"Ah, now, Massa Cap'n, on'y a hunerd dollar? Now, ain't it a low'rin' o' myself to be sold that price?"

"Well, you settle that with Darby. If he likes to buy you, all right: I shan't."

After some little haggling, Darby Kelly succeeded in making the purchase for ninety dollars, putting ten in his own pocket.

"Want anything, boss?" asked the Irishman, of Captain George; "belts and swords, and all the 'coutrements is polished up beautiful. The Lord be praised, I'll not hev to dirthy my hands for the future. I fale like a rale ould Irish gentleman now I'se got a black nigger all to myself Jupe, you divil, go an' git de pipeclay, and clane my rigimentals."

"Go to thunder! you tink I goin' to clean your tings at de price of ninety dollars? Tell you, Irisher, dat ain't an able-bodied nigger's price nohow; dat's a piccaninny price. An' I reckon when a nigger chile is purchased de massa's got to feed him and keep him till he grow up."

"Grow up! Why, you tief of blazes, do yer mane to say yer ain't done growin'?"

"Massa Darby Kelly," said Jupiter, gravely, "you bought dis hyar nigger at piccaninny price, and dis hyar nigger air a goin' to do piccaninny work—dat is, what he dam pleases. You'se got to keep me for five year 'fore you git's a stroke of work."

"Oh! you're a piccaninny nigger are you? Well, now, captain," turning to Hubert and George, "I 'spose an Irish gentleman, who is a proprietor of a nigger piccaninny, can wollop him when he likes, and knock nigger music out o' his head with a stick?"

"Oh, certainly, certainly; of course, a gentleman may thrash his nigger."

"Then, be Jabers, if I don't hev my ninety dollars out av him ivery day in the week, and double allowance on Sundays, my name ain't Colonel Kelly. Come along wid yer, nigger. I'll play poker wid ye, and win some o' them dollars back."

CHAPTER XVIII.

SUSPICIONS.

So your Irish retainer is a colonel," said Hubert, laughing after the pair had taken their departure.

"He was a corporal in the 'Carolina Crashers,' poor Darcy Leigh's regiment, and some of the men dubbed him

Colonel in chaff. Darby was highly complimented thereby, and accepted the title gravely."

"They're a curious pair, he and the nigger."

"They are so; it's wonderful how attached they are to each other. The Irishman, though he will abuse the nigger himself, won't let any one else. They've had some rare fights. Jupiter is the biggest, but Darby always gets the best of him. His Celtic blood is too much for Jupiter's African laziness, though, by the way, the nigger's as strong as a team of oxen if he'd only put out his strength. Hallo! see that fellow there talking to that beautiful slave girl? Do you know him?"

"Know him? yes; that's Varley Fang; he's a Northerner by birth, but as he's got a plantation down here, he's a resident. He's a partner in a New York house, too—very rich."

"But he's a Yankee at heart."

"No, I think not; he professes to be with us."

"Then he's a traitor."

"A traitor! what makes you think so?"

"I saw him in New Orleans a day or two back. I was walking behind him and another man in Jackson Square; they were in earnest conversation. I thought I knew the fellow he was talking with, and followed them into a low French restaurant in a bye street. I was mistaken in thinking I knew the fellow, but overheard some of his conversation."

"Well?"

"He was a Yankee—a paroled prisoner—and, I afterwards learned, a relation of General Butler's. I was told at the St. Charles, when I pointed him out, that he was a bastard of the General's. From what I gathered from the few words I could pick up of his conversation, he allowed himself to be taken prisoner purposely."

"Ha! ha! and what did Mr. Fang say?"

"Oh, he remained silent, scarcely putting in a word. But the other fellow talked like a spy, spoke of the forts down the river, the boom, and the other obstructions. At the finish of their talk that man yonder got up, the other following his example."

"What you say is all very well, Seymour, but it's not so easy as you think."

"I tell you one man might do it; I'd do it myself if it wasn't for this lame shoulder of mine, which prevents me swimming."

"Ah, very well—all very well. It's not to be done so easily. Where will you find your man?"

"If I was in your place I'd soon find a man?"

"How do you mean?"

"Why, there must be plenty of slaves about who would risk it for their liberty and a few hundred dollars. Turn me loose among your niggers, and I'll see what I can do. It would be a certain fortune. The General would give any monopoly or privilege we chose to ask him after the city had fallen."

"Just at that moment I leaned forward so as to catch what they said, for I began to feel deeply interested; Varley Fang, as you say his name is, caught sight of me."

"Hush—sh—sh!" he said, 'you are overheard—mind what you say, you fool—it's treason here. Come away!'

"Then they went out together. There he goes. That's the fellow, I'll swear."

"Wonder what they could have been talking of!"

"Can't say; but it was some treachery about the Yankee fleet."

"Oh, there's no fear of that! It's a dead impossibility they should ever get up the river. It's bristling with batteries below the city, even if they should pass the forts."

"I say, he don't seem to make much progress with the girl. See how mournful she looks, and what a cunning loving look he's put on his face. I suppose he fancies it's fascinating. He's evidently making love to her."

"Making love to Lola!" exclaimed Hubert, colouring up—"like his d—d impudence!"

Then, raising his voice, he called sharply,—

"Lola!"

She looked up instantly, as did Varley Fang. The latter took his hat off, with an affectation of pleasantry, to Hubert Glyme. He started, however, and looked discomposed as he observed the Englishman.

Lola, without bestowing a word or look on him, ran tightly into the house, and came upstairs to her master.

"Did you call, sir?"

"Yes," said Hubert, rather angrily. "What are you doing, talking to Mr. Fang—love-making, eh?"

The girl blushed crimson, and replied—

"Sir, I don't understand you. Why do you insult me?"

"I had no intention to insult you," he said, regarding her in a peculiar manner. "I saw you in earnest conversation with Mr. Fang. By his looks and manner I judged that he was making love to you. You know it is a way Mr. Fang has—they say he's got quite a harem of pretty girls of his own. Perhaps——"

Hubert in his fit of jealousy—for, though he would not have owned it to himself, such it was—was about to make an ungenerous speech. But the starting tears in the slave girl's fine eyes, her quivering lip, and heaving bosom, appealed to his better nature, and he desisted.

"What I meant to say, Lola, was this—and I hope you will take it in good part—Varley Fang is no acquaintance for any honest girl in your position."

"Honest girl!" she cried, bitterly. "Is it, then, possible that a slave can be virtuous—can be anything but what the lordly white man pleases? What but fortune—a little kinder to me than many of my caste—saved me from being the property of such a man as Mr. Fang?"

"You acknowledge, then, that your present lot is fortunate?" he said, evidently pleased at the admission.

"Yes, so far as a slave can be said to be fortunate. You, Hubert Glynne, my master, though a hot-blooded, passionate man, have the feelings of a gentleman. Though you, as all your race, look on me with contempt, you have never yet been so unmanly as to attempt an abuse of your power. Had you done so—had I not reason to love and respect you and yours, the warning you received the other night would never have been given."

"I have not forgotten it, my girl. Believe me, I am not ungrateful. Your notice of the meaning of the Fiery Cross enabled us to take prompt measures, and crush this revolt at once and completely. I have promised you your freedom. Claim it when you choose."

"Miss Maude says, sir, that, if ever I am to be freed, she would like to be herself the giver."

"Jace. She wishes me to assign you to her absolutely?"

"Yes, sir."

"It shall be done. I will give orders about the papers at once."

"And my brother Sebastian?" she asked, sadly.

"He attempted my life," was the gloomy reply. "I will not free him, even for your sake. It would be an injustice to my fellows—a premium on assassination!"

"Oh, master, master!" the girl pleaded, "will you not let me purchase his freedom? I care not if I toil for years."

"He shall not be freed," replied Hubert, sternly. "He tried to assassinate me. Had he not done so, I would, for your sake, have manumitted him. As it is, he shall wear his chain till the day of his death."

Lola, knowing full well that entreaty was useless, moved sadly and slowly away. Both the Englishman and her master followed her with their eyes.

"Upon my soul, sir, she's a magnificent girl, this slave of yours. I don't think I ever saw a more splendid specimen of female beauty. Heavens! if that girl were dressed and educated, what a sensation she would make! It was not only her face and figure which struck me, but her whole manner and appearance. Her walk is like that of an empress."

"Yes," said Hubert, musingly, "she's a beautiful girl—very—too beautiful. It's only lately we began to notice it. Fact is, sir, I must get rid of her, and that straight off."

"Get rid of her!" asked George. "Why? She is faithful, isn't she?"

"Faithful—yes. The poor girl frets and pines about being a slave; but I know that in her heart she has a sincere affection for me and my sister."

"Well, is that an objection?"

"Ah! I see you don't understand, so I must speak plainly. It is an objection, and a great one. Now, I'm not by any means strait-laced, or anything of that sort, but somehow I like to keep my house pure. I don't like a beautiful slave girl constantly about—an everlasting temptation. I am not an anchorite, and sometimes that girl's flashing eyes and handsome face make me feel as though—as though—well, I feel as if I could make a fool

of myself and fall in love with her, but for her being a slave."

"Well, but you can free her if you like, and then fall in love with her, can't you?"

"Sir," cried Hubert, in a tone of indignation, "you forget that the taint of slavery can never be effaced—that I am of one of the oldest families in Louisiana. I beg you will never mention me in connection with a slave girl again."

Hubert Glynne was certainly not without faults, and among these might be mentioned a haughty pride, which almost amounted to arrogance.

"Good afternoon, Hubert—how are you? Any letters to go North? I've got an opportunity to-morrow. You know I am able to get these things done. The Yankee Government believe me loyal, and, on account of the immense business of our firm, I always manage to get passes through the blockading squadron."

Hubert Glynne frowned and looked decidedly black when first Mr. Varley Fang entered the room, but, naturally good-tempered and unsuspecting, he threw off the feeling, disarmed by his guest's careless friendly speech.

"Well, yes," he said, "I want to get a letter through to my brother Launcelot. He ought to be here buckling on his armour for the fight, instead of kicking up his heels in New York."

"Of course—of course. I'll be happy to send the letter through with some of mine. You ought to be able to get an answer in a week or ten days. Shall you address it to him direct, or to be left at a friend's house? You must remember all these letters have to be delivered by hand."

"I shall send it to the care of Cassandra Vandaleur. She or her father will be sure to know where he is. He is such a restless fellow, it's impossible to know where he is at any one moment. Last I heard of him was at Niblo's."

"Oh! the Metropolitan. Yes, he was there when I saw him some month or two ago, but was going to move to New York. But, as you say, Cassandra Vandaleur will be sure to know his whereabouts. He was always dangling about with her."

This was said with a great deal of significance, which quite escaped Hubert Glynne. For some two years it was

an understood thing that he and the fair Cassandra were tacitly engaged. The secession of the Southern States, however, and the outbreak of the war, prevented the consummation of marriage. Still, however, there was no rupture, and both looked forward to the conclusion of the contest, when it was fondly hoped on all hands that Miss Vandaleur would become Mrs. Glynne.

Hubert suddenly remembered that he had not introduced Fang to the Englishman, and immediately repaired his error.

"Oh! Mr. Fang, this is a friend of mine—Captain George."

The latter bowed coldly an acknowledgment of the other's apparent cordiality of manner. Varley, however, was not in the least discomposed by his coolness, but said carelessly—

"Oh, by the way, I saw you in New Orleans the other day, I think. You're a stranger, I imagine, or you would scarcely have been in that low French shanty."

"You and your friend seemed very comfortable there, anyhow."

"My friend! Ha, ha, ha! that's good. Why, the fellow was a Yankee spy."

"I must say he did not impress me favourably."

"I should think not indeed—a rank scoundrel! I was pumping him. He's a prisoner on parole, it seems. Knew me once in New York, and thought, as a matter of course, I was dead for the Union, so I let him unfold all his little plans and plots. Would you believe it, Hubert, the fellow got arrested on purpose in order to be able to get plans of the forts guarding the river. I've fixed him for to-morrow night."

"How fixed him?"

"Well, I've let the Provost Marshal know of his little game. His parol will be revoked. He'll be arrested and most likely tried and shot for a spy. It strikes me, Hubert, there are a good many spies about."

"I am of the same opinion," said Captain George, drily, and looking the last speaker coolly in the face.

"Ah! well, they'll have a hot time of it if they're caught at their trade. I must wish you, gentlemen, good day now. Have your letters ready this evening, please."

"I will write as soon as I've finished this cigar."

"You see, my good friend," said Hubert, lazily, "you did this Mr. Fang an injustice in fancying he was plotting with the paroled Yankee officer. He was only laying a trap for him, it seems."

"I very much doubt it."

"Well, it can easily be settled. I'm going in to Orleans to-morrow—you can come too if you feel inclined—and we'll just inquire at the Provost Marshal's quarters. I should like to feel certain myself."

CHAPTER XIX.

A PLOT TO ABDUCT LOLA.

HUBERT GLYNNE finished his cigar, leaving George to himself.

"Hi! you Jupiter!" he shouted, presently observing that worthy kicking his heels about, sitting on a rail fence some twenty yards off. "Where's Darby?"

"Gone into de barn at de back. De Irisher's got a skinful o' whisky. Dis chile's won all de dollars he'd got, and now he's gone off to sleep on de corn straw—drunk, and savage as a ole bar."

But if the Irishman was drunk, as Jupiter said, he had his wits about him, for some two hours later he was taking some orders from his master, when Lola entered the room, bringing in cigars and another bottle of iced wine. She had not forgotten how enthusiastically the Englishman spoke up for her at the conclusion of the terrible scenc beneath the tree to which her brother was to have been hanged, and took especial care that he wanted for nothing—herself waiting on him.

"No, thank you, Lola," he said, "nothing more now."

Darby Kelly, on hearing the name, turned round and confronted her.

"So yer name is Lola, is it? An' ye knew what's good for yez, my winch, ye'd look sharp afther yerself. I heern 'em talking about ye jist now."

"Heard some one talking of me—who was it?"

"Divil a bit do I know. Some feller wid a straw hat on his head. They're agoin' to carry you off whin they get a chance."

"Carry me off!"

"Divil a thing ilse; an' then put it about that ye boulded."

"Carry me off! What can it mean? Who were the men?"

"Tell ye I don't know. There was tew men, and the tallest one wid a straw hat winds up by saying—ay, and clinching it wid a big oath too—saying, 'By ——! I mean havin' the gal somehow or other. I don't think she's to be bought—so I must try another way. Tell ye I mean it!'—and then out he raps another oath—'and when I set my mind on anything I'll do it.' 'Better mind what you're arter, sir,' says the other feller, 'the gal's all a wild tiger cat.'"

Captain George saw Lola grow pale as she listened, and elicited from the Irishman a full account of what he had overheard.

Darby Kelly had gone into a barn at the rear of the house, and curling himself among some cotton bales, dropped off to sleep. He was presently awakened by the sound of voices. The barn was dark, so though he could hear, he could not see well. Two men came in together, and, after looking round, fancied they were alone, and talked freely. He didn't pay much attention at first, but after a little time became interested. The gist of what he heard was that the girl Lola should be taken off on a favourable opportunity, and shipped off by water somewhere. One man was tall and wore a Panama hat, the other short and thickset, and always addressed the tall one as "sir."

"Have you any idea who these men can be?" asked Captain George.

"Yes, sir, I can guess. If it is those I think, they will attempt it. But they shall not succeed—they shall not. Sir, will you get me a pistol?" she asked abruptly

"For what purpose?" he asked

"To defend myself from insult and violence. If these men attempt to carry out their design, their lives shall pay the forfeit."

"You will only use the pistol in self-defence?" he asked.

"Only in self-defence."

"Darby, go and get me that small revolver from my valise."

"Is it the one yer honner shot the kernel wid, or the five barrellled one?"

"Neither; the one with the dagger."

"Here you are, young lady," he said, when Darby returned with the weapon; "there are five chambers, and besides, when all are discharged, by touching a certain spot a dagger springs out, and is fixed like a bayonet. Darby, get a box of cartridges and caps."

"If ever you have occasion to use it, aim low, as at short range it throws up a little. The bullets, you observe, have all got my crest and monogram on them. I had the mould made so on purpose. I thought that when I had occasion to use it I would give the recipient or his executors the opportunity of knowing who shot him."

"Not a bad idea."

The Englishman smiled cynically as he handled the bullets, a smile which seemed to betoken an utter indifference to pity or any weakness of that sort; indeed, his whole manner and demeanour gave the impression of his being a man who had seen much and been hardly used by fortune, consequently, with no merciful qualms or scruples as to disposing of an enemy in fair fight.

"You can depend upon that pistol," he said; "I've had occasion to use it often, and it never yet failed me or missed fire. Aim at the belt, and the ball will go through the lungs; at the chest, and the head or neck will suffer."

"And the price, sir?" asked Lola, shuddering a little from womanly instinct at the cool manner of this soldier of fortune: "I have not much money."

"The price, my fair Louisiana beauty, is to you nothing. I freely give it to you, and hope you will make good use of it."

"I thank you, sir," she replied, with quiet dignity, "and will accept your gift. Perhaps some day I may have an opportunity of requiting you." Then she glided away.

"Be Jabers, cap'n, but she's an all-fired screamer, that

girl. An' they call her a slave! Tunder and ounds! in ould Oireland they'd call her a lady, and there'd be heads broke av any onc denied it."

"Yes, Darby; handsome as she is, and white skinned withal, she is, nevertheless, a slave."

"Say, guvnor, why don't yez buy her? Shure she'd be a credit to us."

"No, Darby, I don't want to own a slave. I'm not overburdened with scruples, or what people call conscience, but I don't think I could sleep easy if I knew I owned a fellow creature. But if you fancy her, you'd better buy her yourself," he added, in a bantering tone.

"And may the divil have me, boots and all, av I wouldn't but for the want o' the money."

"Swop Jupiter for her."

"Ah, now, yer honner, is it the poor divil of a naygur? Be Jabers, I'd like the gal uncommon, but I'd be loth to part wid Jupiter. He's on'y a naygur, and his skin's black as charcoal, but, by the powers, he's got a white soul."

"Well said, Darby; you may go now—I shan't want you again."

As the Irishman left, Captain George, looking forth from the balcony, saw Varley Fang strolling towards the house, coming from the direction of the negro quarters. Scarcely had he entered the court-yard when Lola darted out to meet him. He started back in momentary alarm at the girl's wild and passionate look. Captain George thought for a moment that she had forgotten her promise, and was about to attack him; but he was mistaken. This is what passed.

"Mr. Fang," she exclaimed, white and trembling with excitement, "you have been talking about me."

He quickly recovered himself, and replied, with a laugh, "Well, my plantation beauty, ain't I always thinking of you. It is not strange that the tongue should follow the heart, surely."

"Laugh and sneer as you will, Mr. Fang, but listen to what I now tell you. I have reasons to believe you have some wicked design on me. Now, so help me Heaven! if ever you give me cause, I will have your life in satisfaction for the attempt. Slave though I am, I am armed and

while there walks such a villain as you I will take care to be so. I will shoot you down like a dog—you, or any vile ruffians you may employ."

"Ah! indeed; quite a vixen, I see. I shall inform your master, also the Vigilance Committee, that you're armed. There is a law prohibiting any slave to carry arms without special permission, and punishing severely those who do. We will see whether your words are true, or mere idle boasting."

"And I will inform Hubert Glynne of what took place in the barn a while back between you and your hired accomplice."

"The barn? You were there, playing the spy?"

"No matter; I know what passed, and knowing, I am prepared. I myself will inform Mr. Glynne of your villanous designs."

This did not at all suit Varley Fang.

"Nonsense," he said, endeavouring to smile; "I was only joking; I have no intentions of carrying you off against your will, or any other girl."

"Well, I shall let my master know of what you are pleased to call nonsense."

"I bid you beware, young woman," he said, growing very white; "if you dare do such a thing I will make you rue it."

"Ha, ha! I fear not your threats. I dare you and defy ——"

"I will have your brother hanged, as sure as my name is Varley Fang."

"You—you have not the power. Hubert Glynne has pardoned him."

"Yes; but the law of Louisiana has not. By that law a slave who attempts the life of a white man is doomed to death. Do you know what they will do in this case?"

"No," said she, falteringly: for though she feared not for herself, she dreaded endangering her unhappy brother.

"They will give your master a thousand dollars as compensation—seize the culprit, and hang him."

Lola's heart sank. She knew enough of the law to be aware there was truth in this.

"Look you here, my proud slave beauty. I have taken a fancy to you, and mean to own you some day if money

and influence will buy you. Till then I am content to wait. When the proper time comes you will be reasonable. When you are my property—in my power”—his eyes gleamed here, and there was a licentious expression on his face which made the girl hate him more bitterly than ever —“ then you will have to do as I wish, surrender yourself soul and body, if I wish it.”

“ I would kill myself, you wretch, rather than submit to be your slave—your plaything ! ”

“ Ah ! I have heard girls talk so before ; but they came round, and, strange to say, were anxious for me to allow them to name their child after them.”

“ Accursed scoundrel ! ” cried Lola, trembling with anger, “ you shall pay for this insult some day.”

“ Ha ! ha ! ha ! Let those laugh that win, my charming Lola. Adieu, for the present. I see Hubert Glynne out by the stable. Beware of what I told you : if you trifle with me, or use my name, I’ll hang your brother, I will, by —— ! ”

Then he sauntered off, endeavouring to look careless and unconcerned ; but inwardly he burned with rage, and swore to himself again and again that he would never rest until he had obtained possession of Glynne’s beautiful slave.

CHAPTER XX.

THE SECRET SOCIETY.

HUBERT GLYNNE having determined to give up residence on the plantation, employed himself making the necessary arrangements, whilst his sister was recovering from the effect of her wound. He had a house in Jackson Square, New Orleans, to which he moved part of the furniture, and otherwise prepared it for occupation.

Meanwhile the war progressed vigorously. The Confederate armies gained some great victories by land, and all was joy and enthusiasm : that they could ever, by any possibility, be beaten by the hireling Yankee troops, no Southerner for a moment believed. Everywhere beyond

the reach of their gunboats the Federals were defeated with slaughter; but within the sphere of operations of their preponderating naval fire, it was quite different. The fleet, accompanied by transports with troops, under the now infamous General Butler, was slowly pushing its way up the river, and approaching the defences of New Orleans, the largest and most important city in the Confederacy. The inhabitants, however, treated the presence of this fleet with the utmost contempt.

The river was guarded by strong forts sixty miles below New Orleans; and even should the passage of these be forced, the city was declared impregnable.

As for the late slave revolt, although the excitement which it had caused gradually subsided, still it produced its effect far and wide. No precautions were omitted to prevent another attempt. Mounted patrols rode round all the plantations by night and day. All the women and old men among the whites had arms given them, and, last, not least, a society was formed, called the "Knights of the Fiery Cross."

The Southerners adopted the Fiery Cross—the signal for revolt—as their own watchword; and in a month from the time of the affair on Gum Tree Hill, there were many hundred young planters and New Orleans gentlemen enrolled in this society.

At first it was formed with the sole intention of providing against a slave insurrection; but as the danger of this was obviously now very small, the band gradually assumed another shape.

The revolt of the blacks had been certainly traced to some fanatic Northern abolitionists, who had come up with the fleet and managed to open a communication with some of the discontented slaves on the plantations along the river.

At any time these men would have been in imminent danger of their lives, if taken. But these knights of the new order drew up a special code of laws, of the most severe nature, against all slaves attempting revolt, or all persons, whether coloured or otherwise, who might aid them. Furthermore, it was enacted that all escaped slaves found in arms on the Yankee side should be absolutely refused quarter.

All members of the Order of the Fiery Cross pledged themselves to abide by the laws of the society—to make war on the Yankees until they should have relinquished their arrogant pretensions. The members of the fraternity had a secret code of signals, and a cypher by which correspondence could be carried on. Every one was pledged to extend the numbers and influence of the order in every possible way, especially among friends in Northern cities and foreign countries.

The infection spread rapidly, and soon the Knights of the Fiery Cross grew quite celebrated down South, and were avowedly a power in the land. In Canada there were many hundreds of them, and crossing the border the influence of this singular organization permeated the Northern cities, in all of which—even puritanical Boston—there was a large sprinkling of Southern sympathizers.

Women, not only Southern ladies, but many of New York and Baltimore, enthusiastically enrolled themselves as members, and declared adhesion to the articles and rules of the Order of the Fiery Cross.

The preamble of the articles of this secret society set forth as follows :—

“This most honourable order is established for the protection and vindication of our rights as citizens of the Southern Confederacy, for the more effectual pulling down of domestic treason and servile insurrection, and for the condign and summary punishment of those for ever to be accused white men who endeavour to stir up the brute passions of the slave race against their masters.

“Article 1.—The knights of this order, on receiving intelligence, by messenger, letter, or otherwise, that the symbol—the Fiery Cross—is hoisted at any place, shall immediately repair there with all possible despatch to join the rendezvous. The members shall inform all other members whom they may meet on the road, and urge them to accompany them.

“Article 2.—(On such occasions, and during the existence of any insurrection or attempt at one, all negroes found at large shall be made prisoners; and if unable to account for themselves satisfactorily shall be immediately
anged.

"Article 3.—All negroes or escaped slaves captured, and bearing arms in the Yankee armies, shall be immediately shot or hanged. In case of the proposed surrender of a negro regiment it shall not be accepted. To prevent complications and trouble, no quarter shall be given on the field.

"Article 4.—The members of this order shall be bound by oath to assist one another—not to reveal the secret passwords, signals, or cypher.

"Article 5.—The Knights of the Fiery Cross shall solemnly swear to carry out the orders of the president and council of members, which orders, to be legal, shall be voted by a clear majority of two-thirds of the members present, such two-thirds not to consist of less than sixty members. Persons indicted as traitors shall be assigned the death punishment in their absence, and certain members of the body shall be deputed to carry the sentence into effect wherever found.

"Article 6.—The edicts of the council and president shall be absolute and binding on all members, who must obey without questioning. Where, however, the execution of punishment shall be assigned to a member by ballot, and the criminal shall happen to be a relation or former friend, the council may, at its discretion, amend the choice on the prayer of the balloted member.

"Article 7.—Every member shall contribute to the funds of the society either in money, produce, or arms, and shall solicit subscriptions from friends and members of his family.

"Article 8.—There shall be a meeting every month, for the election of officers and general business; and a special meeting, at which all members shall attend who are not prevented by other duties, once in three months.

"Article 9.—Every gentleman joining this honourable order shall subscribe to the articles, and freely agree to accept death as a fitting and deserved punishment should he ever betray or prove recreant."

There were other rules and minor regulations, which need not at this place be specially mentioned. Suffice it to say, that no trouble was spared to render the laws of the new order as terrible, and the whole affair as mysterious, as any secret society of modern times.

Although Hubert Glynne warmly entered into it, as did nearly all the hot-blooded young Southerners his friends and neighbours, Captain George, the Englishman, thought it advisable to hold himself aloof. As an Englishman he did not consider himself justified in swearing implicit obedience to the commands of a secret tribunal, although he was willing to fight on behalf of the Confederates, and aid them to achieve their independence.

Hubert Glynne duly entrusted Varley Fang with the letter to his brother, and by Captain George's advice sealed it with his signet ring. The Englishman could not help distrusting this go-between, whose interests appeared to be half Northern at least. Nor did he make any secret of his opinion on the point.

CHAPTER XXI.

ON TO THE BATTLE FIELD.

EVENTS marched on rapidly. Amidst the toil, peril, and tumult of war the Confederate flag was bravely borne, and there was not a man of the haughty Southern aristocracy who did not laugh to scorn the idea of defeat by the Yankees, with their hordes of Irish and German mercenaries. This overweening confidence was ultimately disastrous to their cause. They did not shun danger or hardship; but, confident that the war would be short, and end in their triumph, neglected to prepare for so desperate a struggle as it proved. It is true that they planted corn in many cases in lieu of cotton and sugar, and so provided against a famine; but there were many other measures of vital importance which they failed to take.

In the open field their armies were usually victorious, even though inferior in numbers, but the Yankees beat them in fortifications. Many an important post was lost by carelessness on this head and a dangerous contempt for their enemy. There is no doubt that New Orleans might have been rendered impregnable had they devoted their whole energy to the task; but they did not do so and

in this, as in many other instances, reaped the inevitable reward of their folly.

Let it not be supposed that there was a want of vigour and energy. When the Southerners fought, they fought magnificently, and frequently gained the victory over almost overwhelming odds. But they persistently underrated their antagonists, and though, when they found out their mistake, they often retrieved it by desperate bravery, it was at a fearful cost in men.

Hubert Glynne, with amazing promptitude, raised and equipped the horse artillery regiment he had undertaken to furnish. Captain George had a command under him, and Darby Kelly and Jupiter were bombardiers.

A fortnight from the date of the attempted assassination of Maude Glynne saw a great change in the position of affairs at Valverde Plantation. A great part of the furniture had been removed and sent to the house in Jackson Square, New Orleans. Maude Glynne had recovered from the wound inflicted by the assassin's knife, and was now well enough to undertake the journey.

Stanton Glynne, the second brother, a wild and reckless young man, had arrived in haste from New Orleans, to take farewell of his sister, for the regiment to which he belonged had been ordered to Virginia.

Hubert awaited anxiously the arrival of the guns from Charleston. These were rifled cannon of the best quality, and could only be obtained through that port from England, as it was impossible to run the blockade of New Orleans. But in place of the expected guns there came one afternoon, at the latter end of March, news that they could not be had for some time, the vessel having been compelled to make for a neutral port, with difficulty escaping capture.

Hubert Glynne at once made up his mind. Weary of inaction, he resolved to volunteer and join the army of General Beauregard, in Tennessee. He accordingly apprised all his friends of his intention, and invited most of the men he had gathered for his horse artillery to join him.

In a week from the day when he received the intelligence that there would be delay in procuring the rifled cannon, he

was ready, with some twenty other Southern gentlemen, and two hundred stalwart men, to start for the theatre of war, on the Tennessee river. Our friend the Englishman, with his two faithful followers, was to accompany him. Maude was to go to New Orleans, where they had many friends, on the same day they started. Lola was to accompany her, and the fine mansion and estate was to be left solely in the charge of overseers and a trustworthy agent whom he procured from New Orleans to superintend everything during his absence.

The last evening has arrived. On the following morning the mansion is to be abandoned, its mistress going to the ancient city, its master to the battle-field in Tennessee, and the second brother to Virginia, where an equally bloody and important struggle was to commence.

For the last time, perhaps, for months—or for ever, Hubert Glynne gazes out from his balcony over the rich domain he and his brothers own, and watches the sun go down in the west—red and angry, as though prophetic of the life-storms to come.

Stanton Glynne is with him—even his restless nature somewhat affected at the prospect of the utter break-up of the old home; Captain George too is there, grand and quiet as ever; and lastly, Varley Fang makes up the quartette. This gentleman is to remain, and though his host notices it not, the Englishman fails not to see that he is pleased at Hubert's departure, so much so that he can scarcely disguise his satisfaction.

There is not much talk going on—all seemed too much occupied with their thoughts, except, perhaps, Mr. Fang, who is whistling a negro melody and sipping the excellent wine.

It is evening, and the court-yard is as usual occupied by a considerable number of negroes, visitors, and those of the hardy and gallant band who on the morrow start with Hubert Glynne—too many of them, alas! to fall on a distant battle-field.

"How long do you expect you will be away?" asked Varley Fang of Hubert.

"Impossible to say; it depends on the success of the

campaign. If Beauregard succeed in defeating Grant, I shall return at the close of the campaign, perhaps in six weeks or two months."

"You don't anticipate any hard fighting in this quarter?"

"Not possible—the Yankee fleet is in the river below the forts, but to pass them is impossible; and without their gunboats, the accompanying force of General Butler is impotent for mischief. General Niel has a larger army in New Orleans, and would drive this cowardly Yankee lawyer and his hirelings like chaff before the wind."

"Then it is quite impossible," asked Varley, careless apparently, "for them to force a passage of the forts?"

"Quite so; there is a boom and chain and a raft of dismasted schooners which bars their way."

Captain George, keenly watching the questioner, could detect a peculiar gleam of sarcastic triumph in his face. Its sardonic smile half broke out, but was quickly repressed.

"Sure as death," the Englishman said to himself, "that fellow is either up to some treachery, or has information which he does not choose to furnish. I don't feel so certain of the impregnability of the forts and the impossibility of ascending the river. It would be a terrible misfortune to the Southern cause should New Orleans fall. Somehow I don't like the look of affairs. It does not seem to me prudent to drain the State, and especially the neighbourhood of the great city of the South, of the whites, leaving so many slaves to conspire with treacherous emissaries from the enemy. I'm half inclined to believe this fellow Fang has some deep purpose on foot. I will talk to Hubert about it."

Acting on this idea he presently rose, and making some excuse drew Hubert Glynne away and walked with him out into the open air.

"I don't like to be a croaker, or seem a prophet of evil, but I feel I must speak out. That man Fang means mischief, I am quite certain."

"Ah, nonsense! You have taken a dislike to him. I think he is all right: not an agreeable man, certainly; but still you know he is most influential, and what is more, has a stake in the cause."

But the Englishman obstinately adhered to his opinion.

"At least be on your guard against him—that can do no harm."

"Against what do you wish me to be on my guard? What would you counsel me to do?"

This question was one Captain George was unable to reply to. His suspicions were vague, and he was at a loss what to say. A thought, however, struck him; he himself had refused to enrol himself as a member of the pitiless order of the Fiery Cross. He did not feel himself called upon to swear implicit obedience to a tribunal which might order him to become executioner on a traitor, and the laws of which forbade any member to grant quarter to a black man found in arms against them. But though he had frankly and at once refused, stating his reasons, Varley Fang had not done so. He had at once acceded, and, apparently with the utmost readiness, allowed himself to be enrolled as a member. There had been two meetings of the brotherhood during the past three weeks; but Mr. Fang had failed to attend either. On each occasion he had made an excuse, a flimsy one our friend thought, and had avoided taking the oath, and invoking on himself with his own lips the vengeance of all the members in case he should prove traitor.

Thus it appeared that Varley Fang was not a sworn-in companion of the society, yet knew nearly as much of the rules, orders and secrets as any one. It is very doubtful whether, in the event of his being discovered in treachery, this fact would have saved him; but possibly he shrank from the terrible oath required, and thought, at least, he lessened the risk by refraining.

"Have you noticed," said the Englishman, "that your friend Fang has on two occasions kept aloof when there was a meeting of this new society of yours, called for the especial purpose of swearing-in members?"

"Yes, that is true; but he says business detained him in the city."

"Do not let the excuse avail him. He is here now; and if you propose he should swear allegiance to you, he cannot refuse. I feel certain he will be reluctant, but will comply; and I am equally certain that he is a coward at heart, and that the fear of vengeance would have greater power to

keep him loyal than would honour or manly feeling. At all events, there can be no harm in proposing it to him."

"True," replied Hubert, musingly; "it can be done without much trouble. We can have a meeting to-morrow morning, and defer our departure till the afternoon."

"Depend upon it, you will act wisely. I have noticed that he is delighted at the prospect of our going away to the wars."

"I did not observe it."

"You did not take the trouble to do so. I, on the other hand, did. I have habituated myself to close observation of men whom I suspect, and never yet regretted it."

"Well, my friend," said Hubert, "it shall be as you say. I know you mean well, and thank you for the interest you take."

As they entered the room where they had left Stanton Glynne and Fang, Maude Glynne ran up to her brother, bearing in her hand a large sheet of paper. The young lady had now quite recovered from the effect of the wound, and, except for a slight weakness and pallor which remained, appeared but little the worse.

"Ah, brother Hubert, I have been looking for you everywhere; and now I have found you, you will have to fulfil a promise made some time ago."

"What is it, my darling?" he said, placing his arm around her waist, and kissing her forehead.

Hearing her voice, Varley Fang rose, and greeted her with obsequious politeness.

She shook hands with him cordially enough, for she always considered her brother's friends her own, and of course his being there as a guest proved he was a friend.

"How do you do, Mr. Fang? I am very pleased to see you."

"Accept my congratulations, dear madam, on your wonderful recovery."

"Yes, indeed, I have been fortunate. Who would have supposed that I, who have always been delicate, could have recovered from the effects of such a dreadful wound. Do you know I feel quite a warrior, and have a great mind to go to the wars with Hubert and make myself *vivandière* of his regiment."

"What is all this paper about?" asked Stanton Glynne, taking the sheet of foolscap from her.

"Oh, that is for Hubert," she said; and repossessing herself of it, "Come, Hubert—sign, the deed is duly prepared, pen and ink are on the table!" and the pen she put into his hand.

"Sign? Yes, little one," said Hubert, smiling; "that is all very well: but have you any objection to letting me know what it is I am to sign?"

"Not the least; you promised to give me Lola; this paper is a legal document transferring her to me."

"Yes, I remember, I did promise, and will of course perform. I see this is duly stamped." Then, taking a dip of ink, he wrote his name at the foot.

"Now, Mr. Fang," the young lady said, taking the paper, "you shall witness it; and you too, sir," she added, turning to Captain George.

"Willingly," replied the latter.

Mr. Fang, however, seemed doubtful and disturbed in his mind, on first hearing that it was an assignment of Lola to Maude Glynne; a dissatisfied expression came over his face. But by degrees this changed, as though he had rapidly pursued a course of thought which seemed favourable to his views.

Captain George signed first, and was followed by Fang.

"I think I heard your brother say it was your intention to free this girl."

"Yes, that is my wish, sir."

"You are not, perhaps, aware that lately the State laws on the subject have been made more severe. The manumission of a slave is not looked on with favour."

"Then the State councillors are fools for their pains," Captain George broke in; "where the President of the Confederacy is the governor of a State, I would encourage and advise all owners of slaves to free them conditionally on their serving the cause."

"That may be, sir," said Fang, coldly; "as it is, we have to deal with facts, not hypotheses; and as it is a fact that there are certain legal formalities to be gone through before a slave can be freed, I offer my services to Miss Glynne for that purpose."

"Then I freely accept your offer, sir," Maude replied.

"Very good; I will attend to it so soon as I return to New Orleans, which will be to-morrow night."

"You will not be leaving here earlier than the evening, I suppose?" asked Captain George.

"No; I don't like travelling during the heat of the day."

Captain George looked significantly at Hubert Glynne, who comprehended what he meant, and intimated so by a slight motion of the head.

The signatures having been duly affixed, Dolora Velasco was now the sole property of Maude Glynne. At that moment the girl passed the door, and the young lady called her.

She came at once; not hurriedly, but with the nameless easy grace which characterized her every motion.

"Yes, Miss Maude."

"Do you see this paper?" her young mistress asked, smilingly, and holding it up.

"Yes, I see at the foot three signatures—those of Mr. Hubert, of this gentleman," turning towards Captain George, "and also of *that man*!"

Maude looked astonished, but Hubert, who knew her dislike to Varley Fang, could not repress a smile. Captain George, too, looked far from ill-pleased. As to the person thus unceremoniously spoken of as "*that man*," he turned white with anger; but not deeming it prudent to let it be seen, he endeavoured to laugh it off.

"Certainly, Miss Glynne," he said, "your newly acquired slave is not particularly polite."

"Do you require me any more, miss?" asked Lola, quietly.

"No, not now."

And so soon as the words had passed her mistress's lips, the girl glided away.

"She is a singular girl," said Maude; "but I never heard her make a rude speech before. Have you offended her?"

"Offend her!" said Fang, scornfully; as though the idea of offending a slave was utterly ridiculous. "Well, yes; if you please to style it so. I believe I did hurt her vanity the other day. Saw her billing and cooing with one

of the field hands—talking over the fence they were. ‘Now, then, you two niggers, what are you up to there—love making, eh?’ I knew at once the girl was savage; gave a look like a rattlesnake, and darted away.”

“Lola talking over the fence with one of the field negroes!” said Maude, in astonishment. “It seems tome incredible; she is so very proper in her behaviour. Indeed, her colour being so light, I think she looks upon herself as far above them.”

“No doubt, no doubt,” said Varley, carelessly, “and that’s why she was so mad at my saying ‘you two niggers.’ Ha, ha! the upstart jade felt the knife then, I venture.”

“Mr. Fang, you forget yourself. Lola is a great favourite of mine, and will shortly be a free girl.”

Hubert Glynne, when Varley Fang related the insulting speech he had made to Lola, advanced a step, and his eyes gleamed angrily. He felt inclined to knock the speaker down, but restrained himself.

“Bah!” he said, as he walked away to the window; “what a fool I am! Why should I lose my temper, and champion this handsome slave girl? What do I care for her? She may make love to all the niggers on the estate, if she likes. I don’t believe it, though; it’s a d——d lie of that fellow Fang.”

Obviously the handsome slave girl occupied more of his thoughts than he cared to own. For half an hour, at least, he was gloomy and ill-tempered, and presently strolled out; and sauntering along a rough plank road across a piece of land sowed with cotton, he came out into one of the little gardens at the back of the huts of the negroes. It was a very unusual thing for Hubert Glynne to visit the negro quarters. So long as they behaved themselves, he was disposed to grant them every indulgence, and had sufficient delicacy to be well aware that there was nothing they so much prized as the consciousness that, their work done, their huts, their gardens, their poultry, and their pigs, were absolutely their own. He had an aversion to prying and gazing about the huts of his field labourers, and for that reason never visited them. On this occasion it was purely chance, and a desire to return by the shortest road, which induced him to cross the large pass between two of the huts into the street. It

was nearly dark, and most of the negroes had gone into their cabins, for there was a cold north-easterly wind, to which these people have a mortal antipathy. Here and there a light gleamed through the glassless window, or, rather, little hole in the side of each hut. Hubert, however, kept steadily on, scarce looking to the right or left. He was walking on the left-hand side of the road, on the raised hills of dry clay, and passed close to each hut in succession.

All at once the matting door of one was raised, and a man coming out nearly ran against him.

"Now, stupid!" cried Hubert; "why don't you look?"

He thought, of course, that it was one of the niggers; but to his great surprise he recognized by the dim light the face and figure of Varley Fang.

"Hallo, Mr. Fang!" he exclaimed, sharply, "who would have thought of seeing you here? May I ask what you are doing in the quarters of my niggers?"

"Oh! it's you, Mr. Glynne? Beg your pardon, I am sure. The wind blows cold to-night, does it not?"

"Yes, it does; but that is no answer to my question. What are you doing down here? You know it's quite against my rules."

Varley Fang soon recovered his self-possession.

"Well, the fact is," said he to Hubert Glynne, "I've been to see one of the poor wounded devils. You have heard I've skill in medicine, and hearing from your overseer, Busk, that one of the niggers was close on dead, I put a few medicines in my pocket and walked down to see him. I saw him first this morning, and gave him something; and this evening felt curious to know how he was getting on."

"Ah! I see. Will he die?"

"It's hard to say. He's very bad-looking though."

"I'll go in and have a look at the poor devil."

Varley Fang placed himself in the way.

"No, no—do not enter there."

"Not go in—why not?"

A bright idea struck Fang. He was aware of a weakness of Hubert's.

"I advise you not."

"And why?"

"There is a wounded man there, tended by an old negro. What with dirt, the festering wound, and the natural stink of the niggers, the stench is something awful. I was obliged to come away, and feel quite sick now."

"Ugh!" said Hubert, with a shudder of disgust. "I'm glad you told me. I would not go in for a thousand dollars. It would make me ill for a week. Come along—let's go back to the house. Now you mention it, there is a devil of a stench here."

Hubert Glynne had an unconquerable loathing for the peculiar pungent smell of the negro. To all white men this is disagreeable; some find it quite unbearable. This feeling of repugnance caused him to forget his suspicions, and he walked on with Varley Fang without bestowing another thought on the matter.

When he arrived at the house, his sister called him to speak about some final arrangement concerning the removal to New Orleans. Varley Fang had brought a small valise with him from New Orleans, which had been placed in a room at the south side of the mansion. Having found and unlocked this, he took from it a pocket-book full of bank bills and a bag of gold. Then he went out again, and cautiously looking around, to make sure he was not watched, he started off back at a brisk pace for the negro huts.

"I'm safe enough this time," he muttered to himself; "It's dark, and I know by the fool's manner that he is utterly unsuspecting. Anyhow, I must settle this business to-night. That hump-backed devil is the very fellow for my purpose, and if I don't give him a good sum as earnest he'll be off to the swamp again. He's sly and suspicious now."

Thus thinking, Varley Fang made his way rapidly, and found the hut he had before emerged from. Relying on the darkness, and his own caution, he made sure he was not seen; and tapping twice gently as a signal, he entered, and the matting closed behind him.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE NEFARIOUS BARGAIN.

Now, it happened that while Varley Fang was taking the money from his valise, the girl Lola, taking advantage of the fact that she was not wanted for anything, started to visit her brother Sebastian, who was slowly recovering from his wounds.

It was her habit several times a day to visit him, and take him food, medicine, and appliances for his wounds. For this she had her mistress's full permission; for Maude did not believe for a moment that Sebastian had attempted her life.

On this occasion, Lola, who was fleet of foot as a fawn, ran quickly along and reached the hut as Fang started on his second journey. The hut occupied by Sebastian was the next one to that where Hubert Glynne had seen Varley Fang emerge. There was a space of some twelve or fifteen yards between these two huts, as at the rear was a deepish water-hole, where the negroes got water for cooking and other purposes. Room for a path had been left; hence the greater distance between these two huts.

Lola found her brother sitting on a three-legged stool, engaged in burnishing up an old cutlass which lay on the table before him. He was only able to use one hand, with which he was clumsily endeavouring to sharpen the blade with a piece of stone.

The hut contained no furniture beyond two chairs, a rude deal table, and a shelf against the wall, on which were a few articles of cooking, and brown earthenware. In one corner was a rough-looking bed on the ground. There was a fire on the hearth of pine logs. No matter what the weather, the negro will always, if possible, have a fire. Sebastian had a comrade to share the hut with him, who was a pure negro—black plantigrade—calfiess, and always chilly, except when under the blazing rays of the sun: his fellow-slave was absent, and had been so for some half hour. This was no other than the negro the reader has before seen in the swamp, known as the "Pelican." Between

these two occupants of the same hut there was nothing in common but their condition as slaves. Sebastian Velasco was absurdly proud, and had got into his head strange notions: such, for instance, as that he was not of African descent even—that there was a mystery about the unhappy fate of himself and sister. Rightly or wrongly, he believed that he was of white blood, of Spanish descent he thought, and had been sold into slavery by enemies of his parents. This was his theory—a theory which met no support—nothing but ridicule: even his sister refusing to encourage him in it. Her answer always was, when he pressed her to say something on the subject—

“I know nothing, Velasco. Sometimes I have a dim dream, like shadowing forth of happier days: but that proves nothing. God in His good time will, if He see fit, give freedom to the poor slave.”

But though she refused to encourage her brother in his wild dreams—dreams which did no good, and only unfitted him for and made his miserable lot hard to bear—yet the slave girl was not without her own imaginings. Her very nature rose up against the thought that she was of African descent. Her instincts, which almost caused her to loathe and despise her fellow slaves, told her it was not so.

As the girl budded into womanhood, this conviction grew with her growth, and, at the time of which we speak, she, no more than Sebastian, believed that she had in her veins one drop of the same blood as that unhappy and degraded race.

She was, however, careful to keep these thoughts to herself. To give utterance to them, even to her kind mistress, would only cause her to smile pityingly, and think the slave girl had taken leave of her senses; while, as to talking to Sebastian on the subject, that would have had an effect directly contrary to what she wished: her efforts were constantly exercised to quiet and soothe her brother—not further to inflame his angry passions.

But to return to our story.

Sebastian looked up for a moment when she entered, and said—

“Is that you, Lola? I hardly thought you were coming to-night.”

"You know, Sebastian, I never forget you."

"Yes, Lola, you are very kind; your love is the only gleam of light in my wretched life. But for you, I believe I should long ere this have put an end to my existence. Half-a-dozen times I have thought of doing so; but then there arose this to my mind: I pictured to myself you, Lola—alone, a slave, a woman, and beautiful, in the power of those selfish, relentless, licentious tyrants. Then I said 'No! I will live for Lola. If I cannot protect her, I will at least avenge her. That have I sworn; and surely if any man, slave or slave owner, dare insult you, or strive to make you his mistress, so sure as there is a God in Heaven I will slay that man, if my own life be forfeit immediately afterwards.'"

"Ah! Sebastian, I wish you would not talk so. And what do I see? Alas! are you again employed as on that fatal night when I warned you?—are you again endeavouring to sharpen that old sword? Vain task! as vain as is the attempt to lead the slaves to victory over their masters, even though freedom be the guerdon."

"All is not yet over, Lola," he said; "the war has but commenced. Hitherto it has not reached us; when it does so, I will go forth, and, though I have no weapon but this rusty old sword, will strike; and, if I fall, my dying shout shall be, 'Death to the tyrants, and freedom for the slave!'"

As he spoke, gathering strength and enthusiasm from the subject, he rose, and, with his left hand, waved the old sword defiantly around his head.

There was something almost ludicrous in the heroism of this poor wounded fellow; and yet one could have told, by the gleaming eye, distended nostril, and panting breath, that what he said was no braggadocio, but sober truth. Doubtless he would have died shouting out his hate for his oppressors. To Lola, however, there was nothing laughable in the scene. It filled her with sorrowful forebodings of the future, and apprised her but too surely that Sebastian's fierce spirit was no wit tamed by the peril and suffering he had gone through.

"Alas! Sebastian," she said, sadly; "I hoped that the events of the last few days would at least have taught you

the hopelessness of achieving our liberty by force of arms."

"It may be so," he replied; "at all events we can try; and, though we fail again, some of our accursed oppressors may be made to bite the dust."

"Remember your promise."

"What promise?"

"The one you made beneath the tree to which you were to have been hanged. You said that you would never again raise your hand against our master, Hubert Glynne, or any of his family."

"I did," he replied, "and I will keep my word; but how is it that you take so deep an interest in Hubert Glynne?"

He looked at her, searchingly—so keenly, indeed, that she changed colour. However, the oil lamp which burned on the table did not give a sufficient light to reveal this to him, and she answered, as boldly as she could—

"Because he, his sister, and his brothers, have ever been kind to me."

"I did once hear a whisper that Stanton Glynne, the second one, had cast his eye on you, was frequently seen speaking to you, and in wait for you on every possible occasion—"

"Stanton Glynne," replied Lola, uneasily, "is but a boy in comparison with Hubert; he is a restless madcap, and makes fine speeches to every girl he meets. Mr. Hubert spoke to him about it, and told him if he wanted to make love to any slave girls, he must go to another plantation; he would not allow it on the Valverde Estate."

Sebastian muttered something in a low tone, and seemed by no means satisfied.

"And now, about your arm, Sebastian; is it less painful to-night?"

"It is getting better slowly," he said; "but I can't keep it cool. I have used every drop of water in the pail, bathing it."

"Ah! I will get you more. See, here is abundance of cotton rag, and a lotion; also a sleeping draught Miss Maude made up for me. Take the medicine now, directly, whilst I go out for the water."

Lola went out with the pail, and passed by the side of the hut to the water-hole, some twenty yards at the rear. The ground was very wet and sloppy, for there had been some heavy showers during the day; so, on returning, she passed along by the side of the other hut, where she thought the ground was better. None of the negro cabins had windows, only little holes, which closed with a slide, to keep out wet or wind. There was usually one on each side of the hut, none being required in front, where the door did double duty. Arrived opposite to the one nearest to Sebastian's abode, she heard voices, and was instantly brought to a stand-still by the tones of one.

She listened. Yes, there could be no doubt it was the voice of Varley Fang!

"What could he be doing there at that hour?" she asked herself. Almost immediately, she heard the name of Hubert Glynne mentioned by another voice, and instantly she knew that it was her enemy, Hyæna Jones, who spoke. Softly taking up the pail, which she had put down for a moment, she hastened with it to her brother's hut.

"Here is the water, brother," she said, in a quick, hurried manner; "bathe your arm and shoulder; I will be back presently."

"Lola, Lola! where are you going to?" he called after her.

But she was gone.

Once again outside the substitute for a window in the wall of the other hut, she listened intently, and tried to see in. A piece of coarse cotton cloth was hung across the hole, but the wind ever and anon blew a corner on one side, giving her a passing glimpse of the interior.

This is what she saw in these brief glances:—

Four men in earnest conversation, and listening. One of these was Varley Fang; another, Jabez Hack, his confidential overseer; the other two were slaves—Hyæna Jones, and the deformed ringleader of the attempted revolt, "Sandy-with-the-Hump."

"It's settled, then, that you, Jones and Hack, are to do this business of the girl for me. I can depend upon you both I think. It's your interest, Jabez, to serve me faithfully, or I'd not trust you, believe me. And as to

you, what's your name? Jones they call you, don't they?"

"Give me my title in full, while you're about it. It ain't a pretty one, but I've placed to it Hyæna—Hyæna Jones is my name."

"Ah, well! then you two will be ready to act on my instructions in this matter. As for you, Mr. Hyæna Jones, you know I could have caused you to be hung the other day. I can now, if I like. You didn't think on the night of the attempted murder of Miss Glynne that I was about, and saw you sneak in and out again."

This was said with a sardonic, self-satisfied smile.

"Then I was right," Lola said to herself; "and it was indeed that wretch who attempted to murder dear Miss Maude."

She clenched her teeth and hands, and drew yet closer to the window, not to lose a word.

"How was it, Mr. Fang," asked the Hyæna, "that you didn't speak out, when you say you knew you could hang me?"

"My good fellow," replied Varley, with the same cunning, self-satisfied smile, "you are a great villain—an infernal villain—and doubtless I should be doing well by society to have you hung; but such is not my way of doing business."

"What is your way?"

"My way is what I am doing now. When I get a man in my power, I keep him so. Don't you see, you fool, that if you are hanged I couldn't make use of you? Now, I can get some good service from you—at least, for a time, and in the end——"

"I shall be hanged all the same, I suppose?"

"Well, now, I did not say so. If you have your deserts, however, you undoubtedly will."

Had Varley Fang seen, as did Lola, the wild-beast gleam in the Hyæna's eyes, and the ferocious expression which shot over his sinister countenance, he would not have felt, perhaps, quite easy.

"And now to business," Varley went on. "You are both prepared to do this little affair for me any time I like to go into it; in fact, when I shall notify all is ready?"

"Right you are, Boss," said Jabez Hack.

"Good."

"And the price?"

"Five hundred dollars a-piece; two hundred down on the nail."

"'Tis agreed. What do you say, nigger—are you going in for it?"

"Going in for it? Yes," snarled the Hyæna. "I would if there warn't a cent hanging to it."

Fang looked at him curiously, and Jabez Hack said—

"The h—ll you would! and what's that for, nigger?"

"Because I hate her—curse her!—and will never rest till I see her d—d proud spirit broken; see her humbled, body and soul."

He spoke with great vehemence, and showed his gleaming teeth in the dreadful way peculiar to himself.

"And so do I hate her, the upstart nigger that she is. I'd like to have her on my plantations. If I wouldn't break her spirit, my name ain't Jabez Hack."

Varley Fang listened to this, and said exultingly to himself, the words: "Clever fellow that I am; I pitched upon right instruments for my work. They both hate the girl, and will be glad to see her fall into my power." Mr. Fang, with all his cunning, forgot to consider what was the probable cause of that hate: that, most likely, both had been attracted, as he himself was, by the girl's beauty, and had met with the same reception—a scornful repulse."

"Well, then; now about the time? I can't say for certain. A good deal depends on circumstances. Anyhow, I can safely say it will be within a month. You'll be ready, both of you, at a couple of days' notice?"

"I'm ready at any moment," said the Hyæna; "I only wish it was just directly, that's all. Lord help her when she's in my hands! She may holler; I'll soon choke the screaming out o' her!"

"No unnecessary violence," said Varley, quickly. "I don't want the girl hurt; she's too pretty a bird to have her plumage spoiled."

"She's too pretty a bird for you," said Jones to himself; "reckon this beauty may have something to say."

"Well, and how about the other business? You say you don't care about it, Jabez."

"No; I shan't go meddlin' atween the rebs and the Yankees. It's a dangerous game. Either on 'em may take it in their heads to hang a feller."

"It's a large reward."

"Don't care a cent: it's too hot work for me. You get who you like for the business. There's this nigger; he's all-fired ambitious; he'll go in and win for you."

"If it's to aid the Yankees agin our armed tyrants, I'm in, right up to de shoulder. I am, ba thunder!"

"Good lad!" said Jabez Hack; "go ahead, and get your neck stretched. I'll be off, Boss, if you don't want me no more. What about the dollars?"

Varley counted him out two hundred in gold and notes, and did the like by Hyæna Jones.

"Well, good-night to you all, and luck go with you!" said the overseer, putting the money in his pouch.

Lola, listening at the window, stole softly away to the back, and waited till she heard Jabez Hack come out and walk away whistling; then she crept back to her post, and again listened. They were now talking about quite another affair, and, having missed the commencement, she had difficulty at first in making out to what they alluded.

"Don't make any mistake; it's a dangerous enterprise," said Varley Fang. "And if either of you feel the least scared at it you'd better not try. The reward's a big one."

"How much?" asked Hyæna.

"Well, I'm authorized to do what I please, in reason. What do you think of five thousand dollars?"

"A man's life's worth double the money," said Jones, who seemed bent on making a good bargain.

"Well, I don't mind, on my own responsibility, putting another two thousand five hundred dollars on, making seven thousand five hundred a-piece. Fifteen thousand dollars for one night's work! that's not so bad, eh, you niggers?"

Varley Fang here seated himself on the rickety table, and lit a cigar.

"Gold?" asked the Hyæna. "None ov yer rebel notes, nor Yankee ones either, but hard gold?"

"Yes; gold."

"It ken be done. you say?"

"Yes. You'll have to swim and float down about a mile, that's all."

"That's all, eh! as if there was no alligators in the river!"

"It runs sharp now, and would drift you down in a quarter of an hour, or ten minutes, if you struck out as well."

"Look hyar, Boss," put in Sandy-with-the-Hump; "would dis hyar affair settle de bisness; let de Yankees up the river to take de city?"

"Sure as fate, the raft's the only thing that can stop them. Right past the pits, all right, if they ain't delayed by the obstructions."

"An' it'll be known who did it? Mean to say, I'll get de glory ob de enterprise?"

"Certain; people will point at you in the streets, and say, 'There goes the hero of New Orleans.'"

The negro's ungainly form swelled with pride and importance. In fancy he pictured himself in the uniform of a general, to which rank he thought himself fully entitled. His countenance was not without intelligence, but the thick wide lips, retreating chin and forehead, small, bloodshot eyes, and the deformity which gave him his nickname, all combined to render him a repulsive-looking object. His ambition, such as it was, had far too much vanity in its nature, even had it been backed by intellect and energy, to achieve success. This was proved in one instance by the ridiculous entrenchment thrown up on Gum Tree Hill, over which the whites actually rode on horseback; the other negroes, however, looked up greatly to this man, and thought his knowledge quite marvellous. Unlike most of his race, he was extremely taciturn, never wasting words. This, with the fact that he was never at a loss for an answer to any question, and a boundless belief in himself and his destiny, enabled him to take the lead without opposition. Ferocious, cruel, of great bodily strength, and, for a nigger, with a fair share of courage, he was well calculated to impress the minds and imaginations of his fellow slaves. When he declared that he had been specially appointed by Providence to deliver them from bondage, they believed him, and, in a measure, obeyed him as their leader, until the revolt, which had been for weeks organizing, was crushed out in a single night.

The disastrous termination of the enterprize caused his unhappy followers to lose faith in him—to this extent, at least, that neither threats nor promises could induce any number of them even to think of a second attempt. Too many had been killed and maimed by the swift bullet and keen sabre of the victorious whites: too many had lain in the swamps wounded and shivering, only to be hunted out by fierce dogs and fiercer men.

So far as an unassisted struggle might be anticipated, revolt was dead within them. Doubtless, there were some few who remembered that bloody night, and cherished feelings of hatred, and looked forward to the day when they might yet have an opportunity to revenge their wrongs. But these were few, and chief among them was the unfortunate ringleader, the savage, gorilla-looking black—Sandy-with-the-Hump. Though he scarce knew the nature of this desperate enterprize, he engaged himself to do it, not wasting any words over it with the Hyæna, but agreeing at once.

“Dat bisness settled den—ba gorra, I’m de man can do it! I show de dam whites what a black man do. I let de Yankees in on ’em—burn up dere town—kill dere old men and children—make the white women our slaves!—I show ’em—I show ’em!”

He grinned and pranced, threw his arms about, and seemed about to fall into a rhapsody. But Varley Fang interrupted him.

“Come, come, that’s enough. You’ll be a great man some day, no doubt. Now, you listen to what you’ve got to do—your friend, the playful Hyæna here, knows already. Have you any idea what the service is?”

“Suthin’ about swimmin’ and floatin’ down stream a mile or so—guess dis nigger ken do it.”

“You’ll have to float down the river pushing a small raft—just a few boards—before you. On this will be a certain engine of war. You will place this where you are instructed, and wait till the signal is given, when you will light a bit of touch-paper, and if you have no taste to be blown to blazes, you’ll swim to shore as fast as you can.”

“I ken do dat ’ere. Don’t see no ’stordinary bravery in dat.”

"Possibly not. Well, that's what you've got to do to earn the money. Fail, and you get nothing—perhaps shot or hanged by the Confederates; succeed, and you'll have seven thousand five hundred dollars."

"Dam de dollars!—not as I wont hab 'em," he put in, quickly; "but de glory's de great ting—de glory—and blood and ruin to de cussed planters!"

"Well, now, you know quite as much as I intend to tell you at present. You are willing to do it, both of you?"

"Yes, for me," said Hyana Jones, quietly.

"And for me—if it war to walk up to de gates o' hell, I'd do it, if I could see all de dam white men in de world a burnin' inside."

With this amiable sentiment the conversation closed. She heard Varley Fang tell them to come in a fortnight's time in New Orleans and inquire for Colonel Quake, at an address he gave, but which she did not hear. Then, just as Fang moved towards the door, she glided away, and re-entered her brother's hut.

"Where have you been, Lola, all this time? I've been waiting for you to bind my arm up," he said, sharply.

"I had forgotten something up at the house, and ran back. Now I will attend to you."

Then, with steady, unfaltering hand, though her heart beat faster and her breathing was quicker, she bound up his arm. This done, she bade him good night, and ran rapidly back to the house.

"Where is Mr. Hubert?" she asked, breathlessly, of Maude Glynne.

"Hubert is gone to his little room—the library, he calls it—and says he thinks he shall sleep there to-night. If he is asleep don't wake him, as he has a headache."

Lola hurried up to the room, and softly opening the door, entered. A light was burning on the table, and, looking around, she saw that Hubert Glynne had thrown himself on a couch, with a buffalo rug over him, and had fallen asleep. She approached close to him—leant over him till she could feel his breath on her cheek. He moved slightly, and, without opening his eyes, murmured "Lola."

Startled, alarmed, ashamed, she fled precipitately, though noiselessly.

"To-morrow will do," she said. "To-morrow must do I did mean to wake him at all hazards, but I cannot now. Why should he speak my name? Surely he could not have seen me—his eyes were closed. Could it be that he was dreaming of me?"

She blushed and trembled—she knew not why—at the thought.

"Yes, I will tell him to-morrow," she said to herself.

To-morrow! How many things put off till to-morrow have never been done at all?—or, what is as bad, not till too late. What disasters and misfortunes have occurred, not only to individuals, but to nations, by putting off till to-morrow!

What were the consequences of this delay on the part of Lola will be seen in the course of the story—consequences which powerfully affected the destiny of two nations at least.

CHAPTER XXIII.

OFF TO THE WAR!

DURING the night Lola thought deeply on what she had heard. She felt perfectly certain that the villain, Varley Fang, would endeavour to make good his purpose, and carry her off by force. How should she resist the attempt and protect herself? She had the pistol Captain George had given her, it is true; but supposing she should miss, and be overpowered—what would then be her fate? The thought was horror! Everything seemed to be against her. Her young master, Hubert, who she knew would protect her, was going away to a distant State, perchance to fall in battle. As she pictured this to herself her eyes filled with tears, and she sent up a shuddering prayer to Heaven that he might be spared. Then, next to her own danger, came the thought of the conspiracy she had heard between Varley Fang, Hyena Jones, and Sandy-with-the-Hump, in which the latter two were to receive fifteen thousand dollars for doing something—she knew not what. That it was

some enormous treachery she judged from the magnitude of the sum. What course should she pursue? Warn her master was the answer which promptly came to the question. And yet there was something even in this course which was repugnant to her. In warning the Confederates of an attempted piece of treachery she would be taking part against the Federals, in the success of whose arms lay the hope for the ultimate freedom of her unhappy fellow slaves—even her brother, whom Hubert had said he would keep a slave all his life, as punishment for shooting at him. Sorely perplexed and troubled in her mind, she finally resolved to acquaint Hubert with Varley Fang's intended treachery to the cause of the South, and also in what danger she herself stood.

The morning came, and as Hubert and all those of his friends who stopped in the house were to start off that day, there was a great deal to attend to, for since Maude Glynne had received the wound, Lola was now more than ever in absolute command over all household affairs. Then, when she had seen that the breakfasts were served, she went to look for Hubert Glynne, and could not find him. He had gone out on horseback with Captain George, the Englishman—no one knew whither. Later in the forenoon she heard that he was in the large barn in which cotton was stored; but on going there she was denied admittance by a sentry, who said it was the captain's orders, and when further questioned, informed her that the Knights of the Fiery Cross were holding council within.

This was the fact, and Lola had to wait patiently till she could get an opportunity of speaking to him.

The court-yard and the lower part of the house were crowded with men who were going to accompany Hubert, and officers and friends who had come with the same purpose, or to bid him farewell. It was noticeable, however, that there were not many negroes about. The late rising had put masters and slaves in direct antagonism, although there was no cruelty practised—at least on the estate of Hubert Glynne. But the old cordial relations were, if not destroyed, greatly damaged. Masters, though they professed not to fear their slaves—and in most cases truly—yet could not help feeling some distrust, knowing that *

great struggle was going on in which the question of slavery was involved, and that the negroes were as well aware of it as themselves. The slaves, too, felt themselves in an attitude of antagonism. A portion of them in that neighbourhood having risen ineffectually, the whole had to bear the odium and suspicion. The work was not lightened—but many little indulgences and luxuries were cut off, and about the Valverde Estate, at least, there was scant intercourse between the whites and blacks. The niggers, generally so noisy and demonstrative on such an occasion, went about their tasks silently and quietly, and seemed to keep out of sight as much as possible.

There was, however, abundant noise, laughter, and merriment in and about the house of Hubert Glynne. Besides the gentlemen friends of the host, there were a couple of hundred or more rough fellows, who belonged principally to the class called "mean whites," that is, white men who do not own slaves. These had been attracted by the notices Hubert Glynne had caused to be put out in New Orleans and elsewhere, announcing that he was raising and equipping an artillery corps, and that, until the guns could be provided, he would lead volunteers to the wars as an infantry regiment. To do them justice, nearly all were eager for a fight with the Yankees, whom they felt confident of licking, even at odds of two or three to one.

There was abundance of whisky for the men, and wine, and what else might please, for the gentlemen; so that while the Fiery Cross tribunal was holding its secret meeting, those who were not admitted made themselves exceedingly jolly.

As for affairs inside the barn, it is not necessary we should describe minutely all that took place. Varley Fang was compelled to take the oath (a terrible and impious one, by the bye), much against his inclination. However, he could not refuse. To do so, after learning so much, would be nothing but an open confession of intended treachery. So, with a very ill grace, and much paler than usual, he swore as he was directed, fully intending all the while to break his said oath on the first safe opportunity. It was nearly noon before the proceedings terminated, and when the members rose from the rude

table improvised in the barn, they were invited to one spread with a most substantial lunch in the house.

Here, again, Lola had no opportunity of speaking to her master. He was at the head of the table, but surrounded on all sides by friends, sitting and standing, so as to render it a matter almost of impossibility for her to approach him.

"I shall have an opportunity presently," she said: "I will wait and watch."

After lunch the wine circulated freely, and the greatest enthusiasm prevailed. The health of Jeff Davis was drunk—three cheers given for the Confederate States of America. Beauregard, at that time the all-popular general, was also toasted, and the time slipped unnoticed on.

It was two o'clock ere any one had any notion how time was flying. There was a march of fourteen miles to be accomplished that day to the Mobile and Ohio Railroad, whence they would go right on by the cars to join the army under Beauregard and Johnston, in Tennessee, near the town of Corinth.

Hubert Glynne suddenly bethought him of what had to be done that day, and after looking at his watch, rose and spoke to some officers immediately around him, who went out to muster the men preparatory to marching.

Then Hubert, having succeeded in obtaining silence, addressed the company assembled round his table—

"Gentlemen, soldiers of the Confederacy—for I believe there is scarce a man present who has not, or is not about to take up arms for our common cause and country—the time has come when to remain longer idle lookers-on were a cowardly crime. For a whole year the Northern hordes have vainly beaten themselves on the hard rocks of our defending armies. We in this region have hitherto seen nothing of the war. It is being waged in Tennessee and Virginia, and as our natal state is in no danger, thither we are going to aid our brothers in arms. Well assured am I that our brave fellows of Louisiana and Mississippi will unflinchingly bear their share of hardship and peril. We start with a force of some two hundred and odd men, but hope, ere we reach the battle-field, that this, the first regiment Louisiana has sent to Tennessee, may be largely

strengthened in numbers. The regiment will be called the 3rd Louisiana Rangers; and for colours, a silken banner has been made by the ladies of the neighbourhood—a plain blue flag, with the number of the regiment in the corner, and in the centre the device of a cross of fire. It is time to march; the day wears on apace.

“Let the captains of companies have up their men in line, in order that the regiment’s maiden colours may be duly presented. One cheer for General Beauregard and the Southern Confederacy!”

This having been duly responded to, some one cried out—

“A cheer for the ‘Fiery Cross,’ and death to all the Yankees!”

The cheers were taken up by the men outside, and when Maude Glynne appeared on the balcony and waved the emblazoned blue flag, the shouts and yells of enthusiasm were deafening.

“Fall in, men. Gentlemen, to your posts. Officers in front. Fall in! fall in!”

The bugles blew; officers shouted; and the men, excited by cheering and whisky, yelled forth the peculiar rebel cheer—many notes higher than an English hurrah—a cheer which once heard can never be forgotten. Within the house a tumult as great prevailed. The place was crammed with young Southerners, who were about to accompany the regiment, some, for want of commands, as volunteers in the ranks. There was hurrying to and fro, buckling on swords and accoutrements, loud talk, hasty farewells. All was excitement. Nevertheless, in a quarter of an hour from the time Hubert Glynne gave the word, some two hundred and forty men were drawn up in line before the house. Silence was proclaimed in the ranks, and then there was seen a young girl advancing from the house carrying a banner.

It was Maude Glynne. As she stepped forward, bare-headed—fragile and pale from recent illness—all present thought she looked indeed an angel.

She advanced to the front of the regiment, where stood Hubert Glynne in the centre.

As she came up to him he fell gallantly on one knee, and

then the fair girl, looking up and down the line, gave him the flag with these words—

“Soldiers of the 3rd Louisiana, take your banner. Bear it gallantly in battle, and may God defend the right!”

Then there went up to the sky one tremendous shout—long, loud, and high pitched. The slaves at work in the distant fields heard it; wood pigeons in distant trees flew away, frightened, at the unwonted sound.

Lola, the slave girl, heard it too in her brother's hut, and listening for a moment, like a startled fawn, hurried back to the house.

Sebastian had sent an urgent message to her to come to him, and thus it happened that at this moment, when she could have got speech of Hubert Glynne, she was elsewhere.

Hubert Glynne embraced his sister, and called for his horse. Captain George also bade her farewell, and then the word was given, “Form four deep,” and the column of Louisiana Volunteers started on its march.

Captain George rode on slowly behind the troops, waiting for Hubert Glynne, with whom he had become great friends. The latter lingered behind, talking to his brother Stanton, urging him to arouse himself and prove himself a worthy scion of the house of Glynne.

[Be it observed Stanton was a wild, reckless young man, and, though brave and fiery-tempered, did not show great alacrity in taking the field. Probably the city of New Orleans had too great attractions for him.]

Once again Hubert embraces his sister Maude, kisses her pale face, and then springs into the saddle. Waving a last adieu, he trots out from the court-yard, and turning sharp to the left, follows the track of the regiment. Just as he urges his horse into a trot, however, he hears his name called, and the girl Lola, breathless with exertion, runs up to his stirrup.

“Oh! Mr. Hubert, you are going. I have been seeking a chance to speak with you all the morning.”

“What is it, my charming Lola?” he says, kindly.

“There is treachery at work, sir. Varley Fang is a traitor. He is plotting with bad men to carry me off by force.”

"Nonsense, Lola," he interrupted. "Varley Fang would not dare do such a thing. You deceive yourself."

"No, no, indeed I do not. It is too true. And that is not all. Last evening he was in one of the field hand's huts."

"Yes, yes, my good girl, I know. The hut next to that of your brother Sebastian. I know all what he said."

Lola was greatly astonished at this, and knew not for a moment or two what to reply.

He alluded to the time when he had met Varley Fang emerging from the hut, and when the latter had accounted for his visit there in a manner which satisfied the unsuspecting master of Valverde. He knew not that Fang had gone back and that Lola had overheard so important and dangerous a conspiracy.

"But, sir—dear master," she faltered, "there is treason at work—desperate treason. I wish to put you on your guard. Oh!" she cried, wringing her hands, "that I could have a quarter of an hour with you alone."

"No need, my dear girl; no need. There has been treason at work for a long while; there always will be so long as wicked, mean-souled men live. But we will overcome that and all other obstacles with our bright swords, my girl. Fear not. Our cause is too good, our men too brave, for us to be defeated by a horde of Irish and German mercenaries, such as the infernal Yankees send against us. Good bye, my girl; good bye."

The girl seemed inclined to weep, and after hesitating for a moment, he bent down his head and whispered—

"Put your foot in my stirrup, Lola."

She obeyed, scarce knowing why.

Then taking her hand, he lifted her on to the saddle before him, where he held her.

"Lola," he said, as she thus half reclined, his arm around her, "do you know I dreamed of you last night, I dreamed——"

"Oh! don't, sir; don't!"

"I dreamed that you came and bent over me and kissed me—so." And as he spoke he stooped his head, and softly kissed her lips.

A thrill shot through the girl's frame as his lips touched

hers. For a moment or so she lay half reclining, gazing in his face, her eyes languid, melting, beaming with pleasure; then a deep blush of shame covered her face and neck, and struggling faintly, she cried—

“Oh! Mr. Hubert, don’t; please don’t!”

With a gay laugh, Hubert Glynne swung her lightly to the ground.

“Adieu, my pretty Lola,” he said. “Be a good girl, and if ever you do pray, send up a little one for your master, far away, fighting the Yankees.”

He waved his hand, put spurs to his horse, and galloped swiftly on after his friend. Lola watched his receding figure till horse and rider presented but a dull, dark spot on the road. Then she turned sadly back, murmuring to herself the while.

“Pray for him!” murmured Lola; “ay, that I will, night and morning, and in the day too! Haughty, proud, passionate—and, above all, my master—and yet I cannot hate him. Were his life in my hands, and I knew that his death would for ever free me and all slaves in the South, yet could I not pronounce the word. I could not forget his generosity—his delicate honour—his gentleness, and his dauntless bravery. I don’t believe that Hubert Glynne knows the meaning of fear. Ah!” she cried, suddenly halting in her walk, as the memory flashed upon her, “I was too late, I could not warn him—he would scarcely listen, and has now gone to the war in Tennessee, not knowing the plots and villainies which are being hatched. Alas! I know not what to do. It is useless to speak to Miss Maude—she’s far too gentle and timid to be of service. For my own safety I must depend on myself. These wretches will surely make the attempt I heard them plotting. God grant that my heart and hand may not fail me. I have the Englishman’s revolver, and if each barrel slay one of my persecutors, the deed will be one of merit. Ah! Hyæna Jones and Jabez Hack—if Satan does not aid his own most conspicuously—on the day you attempt violence against me your life pays the forfeit.” A low chuckle fell on her ear, and looking up she saw the Hyæna standing leaning against the road fence some ten yards off.

“Ah! ha! my pretty Lola. How is sweet Lola this

lovely day? Ain't you glad to see the backs of so many of the white scoundrels?"

"I would be glad to see a halter round the neck of a yellow-faced scoundrel, and that's yourself, Hyæna Jones," the girl cried, and then bounded away like a fawn, and ran towards the house.

"Ha! ha! ha! He! he! he!" he chuckled, giving utterance to the peculiarly hideous laugh for which he was remarkable. "That white-skinned slave girl thinks some pumpkins of herself, it seems. A yaller-faced scoundrel she called me. Perlite—very. Wait till my turn comes, then I'll show her—I'll punish her. I'll make her hate herself as bad as she hates me. Lord, how I'd like to see her with a litter of Hyænas!"

Again he laughed his mocking laugh, gloating over the thought of his future vengeance.

Now that Hubert Glynne, his friends and guests, had left, Valverde House assumed a dismal look. What furniture had not been already taken to New Orleans was soon in process of removal. The green jalousies were taken down, and the house was left a mere shell, occupied only by one white overseer and an old negress. Maude Glynne shed many tears at giving up her old home—leaving the once peaceful and happy plantation, where she had been born and reared, for a house in fever-haunted but noisy and riotous New Orleans. This city, the commercial capital of the South, had at that time at least 170,000 inhabitants. It had always been notorious for scenes of rioting, murders, street fights, bar-room rows, robberies, and every species of atrocity. Nor had the war in any way improved it. There were at this time in the city some thousands of soldiers on leave, recruiting agents, mean whites, and, worse than all, a host who, too lazy for work, too cowardly to join the armies in the field, preferred hanging about the streets and bar-rooms of the "Crescent City," gambling, cheating, drinking, swearing, robbing and murdering. The streets were not safe by night. No woman could trust herself out alone; and altogether affairs were in as unsatisfactory a state for quiet people as it is possible to conceive. The house which Hubert Glynne had selected for the residence of his sister was situated in a street leading from

Jackson Square, and was in every respect as desirable a residence as could be found in the city. The street was wide, and there were no bars and grog shops in the immediate vicinity, which was an inestimable boon. The household, after the removal from Valverde Plantation, consisted of Maude Glynne, Lola, two coloured men servants of tried fidelity, old Jake, and three negresses, who did the domestic work.

Lola had confided to Maude Glynne her knowledge of the designs contemplated against her, and her terror lest these ruffians should succeed. But the young lady, like her brother, made light of the danger, and thought that her faithful handmaiden was needlessly alarmed. She now no longer treated her as a servant, having determined to make her a present of her freedom, the documents for which purpose she believed were being prepared and seen to by Varley Farg, of whose treachery she had not the slightest suspicion. She would not permit the girl to attend on her at all now, but insisted on her being on terms of perfect equality. She provided her with dress and ornaments befitting a lady, and when they went out together many were the admiring glances cast by strangers on the two beautiful girls, both apparently well-born and well-bred ladies. Maude Glynne, slender, delicate, and pale, from the severe ordeal she had gone through, was yet very beautiful—a soft, gentle sort of beauty, which wins hearts at times when a proud, dark, splendid style would utterly fail.

Assuredly Lola—or rather Mademoiselle Dolora Velasco, as she was called—bore her new dignity well. No rich New York beauty, Parisian belle, or English fashionable lady, could have worn their garments more gracefully than did the ex-slave girl—a slave no longer now, except technically, which she would be until the legal formalities were gone through.

Lola invariably accompanied Miss Glynne when she went out: they were as sisters together, and slowly the crushing feeling of inferiority driven into her soul by the consciousness of servitude wore off; and as she began to realize herself as a free woman, her whole nature, mental and physical, seemed to expand; her beauty developed itself, and grew more luxuriant under these favouring circumstances.

Her eyes grew brighter—more sparkling, and many a young officer passing through the street was mortally stricken by one flash of those splendid dark orbs. Her complexion, too, grew richer—a splendid olive brunette, with the fine colour mantling beneath the clear skin. No one who did not know her history would ever have imagined that she had been—indeed, strictly speaking, still was—a slave.

There were but two things which prevented the girl from being happy. Her brother was a slave, wounded and miserable, with only the prospect of hard work and cruelty before him when he should recover. The other circumstance which preyed on her mind was the memory of the conversation she had overheard between Varley Fang, Sandy-with-the-Hump, Hyæna Jones, and the brutal overseer, Jabez Hack. This caused her to be in constant terror. She had asked for and obtained a room at the top of the house, and always closed the shutters and fastened them with an iron bar before retiring to rest; the door, too, she always securely fastened, and, in addition to these precautions, she every night laid the loaded revolver Captain George had given her beneath her pillow.

By day, too, she always carried this weapon with her. She never went out alone, nor could anything induce her to go out after dark, unless escorted by some friend of Miss Glynne; even then she invariably refused to leave the straight broad street, and kept herself prepared, at a moment's notice, to produce and use the deadly weapon she carried concealed in a small pocket she had purposely made beneath her girdle. The weapon was small, and no one would have imagined that she had fire-arms about her, so skilfully had she managed.

More than once she had gone through a rehearsal in her own room; practised herself in quickly levelling and snapping the uncapped pistol: also in springing the dagger and vigorously stabbing to the right and left. Any one who had seen the girl going through this performance, in the solitude of her own room at night, half undressed, her eyes gleaming, face flushed with excitement, would have decided that it was a beautiful lunatic. So fully did she enter into the reality of the affair that she gave utterance to sharp words of defiance and anger as she made her mock resistance. "Villains! stand off! Ha, you dare!" Then snap, snap,

went the hammer of the pistol twice, in rapid succession. Having thus, in imagination, disposed of at least one enemy, she would turn as quick as thought, and go through the action of firing the other barrels. Then she would stand for a moment with the pistol grasped dagger-wise, like an Amazon at bay ; and then dash forward with a fierce cry, her teeth gleaming, eyes sparkling, on a supposed adversary who barred her progress. Having thus, in fancy, disposed of her enemies, the rehearsal would be over for the time.

There were many who would have paid a large sum to have witnessed this extraordinary scene. Her actions and manner were so impassioned as to give it all the appearance of reality ; and, assuredly, her appearance in this mock tragedy was more *piquant* and interesting than that of many a real actress in a real life scene.

Several times Lola thought she was watched, but could never be quite certain of the fact. A fortnight passed, and no attempt was made, nor, after the first day or so, could she discover anything suspicious. By degrees the alarm she felt, though it did not entirely wear off, yet became modified. She grew daily more confident, and began to rely upon herself and her own powers of defence. One fine evening, walking down Magazine Street with Maude Glynne, the latter suddenly remembered that she had left her purse at home, and as she came out with the intention of making some purchases, resolved to return for it. So, as it was getting late, they turned and walked sharply in an opposite direction. Scarcely had they done so than Lola saw a man dart suddenly into a shop. She did not see his face, but there was something in the figure and general appearance which struck her. So, as she passed by, she half entered the shop in question, and instantly recognized her enemy Hyæna Jones, leaning over the counter talking to the coloured woman who served. His face was turned away from the door, but she instantly knew she was right, and started on with quickened pace.

"What is the matter, Lola?" asked Maude. "How fast you are walking!"

"I have seen something ; some one I am afraid of."

"Whom?"

"Hyæna Jones. Ah ! and there, on the other side of the

street, is Mr. Fang. See, he is coming over to speak. I will stay back."

"What a strange girl you are, Lola, in your fancies. Now you have taken a great dislike, a hatred, indeed, to Mr. Fang, and I think quite without reason."

"Without reason! Has he not insulted me? Have I not heard him plotting villany against me?"

"As to his insulting you, Lola, you are so very sensitive. Probably he did not then know that you were to be free, and only looked on you as on any other girl. What you took as an insult, he meant, perhaps, as a joke; then, as to this plot you overheard, I cannot but think that imagination had a good deal to do with it. You were brooding on the subject, and overheard him talking to his overseer about some runaway slave girl, perhaps. You acknowledged that you did not hear him mention your name."

"Yes, yes, but I am sure it was of me he spoke; there are many circumstances which I cannot at this moment remember which make it impossible I could be mistaken."

"Well, Lola, you must have your own opinion; at any rate, he is hurrying on this legal business for me—or, rather, for you."

"Ah, Miss Maude, would to Heaven you would not employ him! If you knew how I dread him——"

"Hush—here he comes!"

Lola fell back a few paces. At that moment she saw approaching a young officer who had frequently visited at Miss Glynne's. He was just recovering from a wound received at Leesburg, and, in common with all who had been thrown in contact with the ex-slave girl, had been greatly fascinated by her.

"Good evening, Mademoiselle Velasco."

"Good evening, Captain Herault; I hope you are well—or, rather, better. I see you no longer carry your arm in a sling."

"No; I am convalescent, and shall report myself for duty in a week or two, at most; then away I go to the army of gallant old Stonewall Jackson—our fighting lion. Ah," he cried, enthusiastically, "we will show the Yankees what mettle we are made of. I swear to you, mademoiselle,

that if I were to lose my limbs one by one, I would still, if possible, when the wounds were healed, crawl to the front; and when I could no longer wave a sword, would shout defiance and contempt of the Yankee; and I am sure there are thousands, tens of thousands, like me!"

"Alas! I fear this will be a long and disastrous war."

"Long? nonsense! this summer will finish it. We shall send the hireling invaders reeling back across the frontier. Disastrous—yes, so far as this, that many a brave Southern gentleman and poor soldier will fall, gallantly battling for the stars and bars. With generals like Stonewall Jackson, Lee, and Beauregard, to lead such men as ours, we cannot be beaten. But I have something else to say. I have three tickets for the State Governor's ball at the St. Charles'. It is on Tuesday week. If you and Miss Glynne would like to come, I shall be happy to escort you."

Lola flushed crimson, and her heart beat high at the thought. She, recently a slave, to attend a ball where none but the best born and most aristocratic of the Southern ladies were invited. Tickets for this affair were very scarce, and hard to get, as, owing to some party feeling between the plantation people—answering to our county people—the wives and daughters of mere traders and dealers were, if possible, to be excluded. She was not without ambition, and the thought had great charms for her.

"You must ask Miss Glynne."

"Miss Glynne," the young officer said, promptly, acting on her words, and almost compelling Lola to advance to the young lady, who stood a few yards off, talking to Fang. "I have been asking this young lady if she and you would like to come to the Governor's ball next week, as I have tickets. She refers me to you."

"Well—really—I hardly know what to say," Maude replied, in some confusion, for she, too, thought instantly of Lola's slave origin.

"Indeed, if I were you, ladies, I should certainly go," put in Varley Fang, to Lola's intense surprise; "it will be a brilliant affair—quite exclusive."

"I will consider about it sir; at any rate, I am much obliged for the offer."

"Then, Miss Glynne, I will retain the tickets for you and Mademoiselle Velasco."

Let it be here remarked that Maude Glynne had chosen to give Lola the foreign handle to her name in order that people might suppose her late slave, and now friend, belonged to one of the old French families scattered about Louisiana—mostly poor, but proud—holding themselves considerably aloof, but, when they chose to mingle in it, well received in New Orleans society. Very few were aware of the fact that Lola was a slave. Who, indeed, would ever imagine, looking at that graceful beautiful girl, elegantly clad, and moving about with such ease and grace, that she had not been a lady born and bred? Greatly to her own wonder, Varley Fang, though a frequent visitor, did not betray her; and besides, treated her, though distantly, yet with studied respect. This, though it did not in the least disarm her distrust and suspicion, caused her much wonder.

Maude Glynne moved on slowly, and Captain Herault joining her, left Lola, to her intense annoyance, alone with Mr. Fang.

She quickened her pace in order to catch up to them, but Varley stopped her.

"Pardon me, mademoiselle, I wish to say a few words to you."

He spoke quite respectfully, but, nevertheless, Lola did not feel at all inclined to trust herself alone with him.

"I do not wish to lose sight of Miss Glynne," she said, sharply.

"Quite so; we can keep a few paces behind; this will just do. Am I permitted to speak?"

"I am at a loss as to what you can have to say to me, Mr. Fang, after what has passed between us," she said, turning her head away with unconcealed aversion.

"I will explain: I have given you just cause for offence, I will own; I wish to apologize. At the time I never dreamed that you would be in this position—the confidential friend of Miss Glynne, on an equality with ourselves. Furthermore, I will confess that I looked upon you as a

might upon any other girl in your then position, and when you so scornfully repulsed me I was greatly incensed, and vowed vengeance. That, however, is all past now. You are now a lady—no longer a slave. I wish to sink the past; and though, of course, I don't expect we can be friends, do not let us be enemies. I own frankly that I have a selfish motive: you have it in your power to do me serious injury; at present you know not how, but you will know. Let it suffice that I know a word from you would have great weight with Miss Glynne or her brother, and that he will shortly have it in his power to do me the greatest possible injury. Now, on my part, I promise not to molest you, annoy you, or speak against you. As to the latter, I never have done so, and I don't believe there are a dozen men in New Orleans who know you have ever been a slave. I need scarcely remind you that I could, if I chose, have bruited it about everywhere. I have refrained from doing so—from selfish motives, I admit; but still I have refrained. Now, what I propose is this; that we should make a compact—you, on your part, promise not to do or say anything to injure me, I, on my part, promising the same."

Lola was almost entirely thrown off her guard by this proposal. There was just enough of truth and plausibility in it to cause her to think he was serious. Had he professed penitence, reformation, or denied that he ever meant her any harm, she would have known he was lying. But when he owned that it was from selfish motives—that she could do him great injury—then she believed him. She knew already that he feared Hubert Glynne, and thought it quite possible that, seeing her in so strong a position, he dreaded her influence. Besides, too, she argued, although he might have reckoned on outraging a slave girl with impunity, he saw now that she was well protected, and had many friends, who would certainly avenge any injury done to her. Then she believed he was a despicable coward, and to make abject terms with a victorious foe was the very thing such a man would do.

"As far as I am concerned, Mr. Fang," she said, "I have no intention of doing or saying anything to injure you—provided you do not molest me. I don't fear you the

least bit, as doubtless you know, and for that very reason I am willing to do as you say."

"Good! Then it is a bargain. For my part, I solemnly promise not to attempt anything to your prejudice; by word or deed. So long as you keep your word I will keep mine. But, understand me, if I hear that you have been speaking against me to the Glynnes, or any of their friends, I shall feel myself fully justified in doing everything I can to annoy and damage you."

"Very good. I shall join Miss Glynné now."

Then she quickened her pace, and left him with studied rudeness. Her object was to impress him with the idea that she was utterly fearless of him.

"Ha, ha! I had her there. I know that dodge has worked—I could see it in her face. She really thinks I am afraid of her, and for the future she will be less guarded. If she were as cautious and suspicious as she has been, it would be a difficult task indeed. Now—who knows?—she may give me a chance any day. Ah! there's that ball. She will go. It will be kept up till late. Perhaps it may be managed then. I will see the amiable Hyæna and Jabez about it. There is no time to waste, by thunder! I have this other affair on my hands."

CHAPTER XXIV

"I LOVE HIM!"

For some time Dolora Velasco did not relax her caution, but as day after day passed on, and she saw nothing to excite her suspicions, she began to think that the danger was past. She frequently saw Varley Fang, and tried in vain to discover anything in the least suspicious in his manner or demeanour to her. He did not attempt to disguise from her that he disliked her, but also cunningly let it appear that he feared her. Daily she made more friends, and soon Dolora Velasco was talked of as one of the most beautiful young women in New Orleans. She had a host of admirers, many of them hot-blooded young men, who

if she had said she had been insulted, would have cowed or shot Mr. Fang at a moment's notice. She began to get elated at her triumph, her spirits rose, and her beauty seemed day by day to grow more brilliant. She was sad enough sometimes, however, especially when she thought of her brother's sad fate. But she comforted herself by thinking that when Hubert returned he would relent and pardon and free him. Almost his last words to her had been a request to pray for him, and faithfully she obeyed his wish. If ever pure prayer went up to heaven, one did night and morning from the slave girl for her master. Lola was not vain, but she knew she was beautiful. Was it not continually dinning into her ears? Did not the large mirrors in the drawing-room tell her so? Often the thought—the wish—would shoot across her mind—Ah! if he could see me now! Then she blushed at the memory of the kiss he had imprinted on her lips when he bade her farewell, and then she would reproach herself bitterly.

"Fool that I am—he only thought of me as he would of any other 'nigger wench.'"

She had heard him speak of a young negress thus, and had not forgotten it.

"Hubert Glynne is as proud as Lucifer. He despises me—thinks me beneath his notice. And yet"—here she would sometimes glance at the mirror. "I wonder if this Northern lady, to whom they say he is engaged, is more beautiful than I—Cassandra Vandaleur? How I should like to see her! They tell me she is tall and fair, with golden hair and violet eyes, a noted beauty in New York city; and rich too. But what is wealth? Had I the wealth of the world, would I not fling it at his feet? Fool that I am—I will think of it no longer. He would spurn wealth offered by a 'nigger wench.' Nigger—I hate the word! I am not black—I am not hideous, like the majority of the unhappy wretches who groan under their yoke. And yet I, too, was a slave—am a slave until the manumission papers are signed. I will think no more of it, but look to the future. The future! Ah! what has the future in store? Who knows that I may not yet be wealthy, the wife of a rich planter, mayhap, or of a Yankee merchant, if the Federals gain the day. No, away with

the thought; I will die Dolora Velasco. I want not wealth. What is it I do want? Ah! I scarce know. There is a void in my heart. I feel that I could love, and I yearn to be loved in return. And yet, that can never be—at least, by any whom I could ever love. Where is he now? Perhaps engaged in fierce battle with the enemy, bullets hissing round him, shot and shell hurtling through the air. Oh, Father, have mercy," she said, suddenly falling on her knees, "and spare him! Surely the prayer of a slave for her master, her tyrant, should have some weight at thy throne! Spare him for the sake of thy humble servant Lola—spare him, and grant that he may live long, and know happiness. Grant that he may live to see his children grow up around him—that his manhood may be joyous, his old age peaceful, his whole life prosperous and free from care! May he never suffer the pangs I have suffered, nor know what it is to be scorned and despised by one whom he loves, as I love him—yes, I love him! Heavenly Father, Thou knowest I love him with as pure and holy a love as ever burned in the breast of the proudest white maiden. I love him—I love him! and though he were to spurn me from him I will love him to the end—and life and love shall fade together!"

Passionate sobs broke from her, and, kneeling by her bedside, she gave way to her feelings, and in the solitude of her chamber confessed the inmost secret of her heart. A hopeless love was this of poor Lola, one against which she had striven and battled in vain; till, now that he was gone, and she thought him in danger, it burst over all barriers, and overwhelmed her soul with the fierce consciousness of its burning power.

For years she had felt her eyes and thoughts attracted towards her young master. He was so handsome, her *beau idéal* of manly beauty; so brave, gentle, and generous, that, slave though she were, she could not confine her womanly instincts, nor help kissing the cruel hand which for so long had kept her in bondage.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE LADY IN BLACK AND GOLD.

NEW ORLEANS, though a threatened, almost a beleaguered city, kept high festival. The haughty Southerners despised the Yankees thoroughly, and laughed at the idea of their fleet forcing its way past the forts and up to the city. Glad tidings of victories for the Southern arms had lately come from the armies of Tennessee and Virginia, and in the great commercial capital all was confidence, enthusiasm, and mirth. Young men went to the wars with reckless gaiety, eager to meet the hated and despised foe, and certain of victory. This abounding self-esteem and confidence in their own valour and prowess, though it often worked wonders, causing a mere handful to stand obstinately against, and ultimately repel, an army, yet brought bitter bad fruits. Many a position, which was irretrievably lost, might have been strengthened, and retained, but for this unwise contempt for the undoubtedly prepared enemy.

At the time of which we speak, not a hundred men believed in the possibility of the capture of New Orleans. The Yankees might try, as they had already done, but would infallibly be defeated, with the same ease as before. Among the ladies the enthusiasm was even greater than with the men—these fair beings lating and despising the enemy more thoroughly than their brothers, fathers, and husbands.

The Governor's ball was a grand affair for New Orleans. All the most beautiful and distinguished among the Southern ladies were there present, as were many officers of rank, including General Snell, and nearly all the officers in and about the city.

When Lola and Maude entered the brilliantly lighted ball-room—the polished floor reflecting the myriad candles, band playing, dresses fluttering, military accoutrements glittering—altogether a scene of splendour and brilliancy she had never before beheld—her eyes wandered in amazement over the shifting throng—now whirling in the rapid waltz to the soft strains of music—now rushing along to the

fierce accompaniment of a quick gallop—now, for a few minutes, slowly patrolling around to recover breath—and now advancing, retreating, turning, and executing many manœuvres, to her incomprehensible, as quadrilles were danced.

Presently a young officer came up, and was introduced to Miss Glynne by Captain Herault. He then asked Maude to waltz with him, and she assenting, Lola was left alone with Captain Herault.

"May I have the pleasure of dancing with you, Mademoiselle Velasco?" he said.

Lola blushed up to the eyes. She had never waltzed in her life, and for a moment or so knew not what to say.

"I should be very happy," she said, presently, in no little confusion, "but I really cannot."

"Cannot?"

"No, I don't know how—I never learned to dance."

"But you have a good ear for music and time?"

"Yes, I think so."

"Oh, then it is easy! Your feet will instinctively follow the air. Trust to me. Come!"

Yielding to him, she suffered herself to be whirled away, at first feeling no little trepidation. He was, however, an excellent dancer, and she soon found that it was not so difficult. Any little false step she made he compensated for, and soon she fell quite naturally into the rhythm of the waltz—her feet moving as nimbly and correctly as those of any lady present. The waltz was not more than half through when they commenced, and as one by one the dancers dropped off tired, Lola and her partner, with one or two more couples, were left alone in possession of the floor.

"Who is she?" was frequently whispered, as the beautiful slave girl—elegantly dressed, eyes sparkling, cheeks glowing—was whirled around by her skilful partner. Few could answer the question; and there was no little speculation on the subject—some declaring that she was a French Creole, others maintaining that she was a Havannah Spaniard.

"There she is! that dark-eyed, handsome girl in black and gold. Do it well—with a rush, and it must succeed."

She heard the voice, and started, though the words were spoken in a low tone. Glancing in that direction, she saw Varley Fang intently regarding her. He seemed to be pointing her out to some one else—a tall dark man, in plain black. She could not see his face, as he was partly concealed from her, and ere she went round again with her partner, the music ceased, and the dance was over. She and her partner, Captain Herault, were now at the top of the room, and in order to rejoin Maude Glynne, they had to walk the whole length, the object of attraction to all. Lola was dressed in amber satin, trimmed with black lace; a black band round her waist, and a white magnolia flower in her hair completed her attire. She looked splendidly handsome; the amber-coloured dress contrasting admirably with her complexion. A bright colour was on her face, her fine eyes gleamed with excitement and pleasure, her bare rounded shoulders shone white and polished in the candle-light, her movements were grace itself—her whole appearance calculated to ravish and fascinate the beholder.

Many were the requests she had for the honour of her hand in the dance; some of these she accepted, but others she was compelled to refuse, every dance before and after supper being marked on her card for some fortunate aspirant.

As the night wore on, the revellers grew more merry and less constrained—as is always the case at every ball. At supper, Lola found herself next to Captain Herault, who had succeeded in monopolizing her for more dances than any one else, and opposite to Maude Glynne and her partner.

The young lady looked pale and tired, and Lola rightly judged that the excitement and exertion were too much for her.

After supper toasts were proposed, and enthusiastically drunk. First on the list, "The President and the Southern Confederacy." Then came the names of favourite generals; next, "The Governor of Louisiana," and then, "The ladies"—which was drunk with all honours.

After this, some one arose, and proposed "The belle of the ball!"

This, too, was drunk with uproarious enthusiasm. Scarcely had the noise subsided, when cries were heard—

"Name--name!"

"Who is the belle? Let's drink her by name!"

This was very embarrassing, and the hearts of half a dozen young ladies, who considered themselves entitled by superior attractions to the proud privilege, beat high with hope. Lola coloured up, and looked very much confused, for she knew that many eyes were bent upon her.

"The lady in amber and black," she heard whispered a little way off.

"Ay, ay! black and gold has it."

Her dress was amber, and black and gold expressed it nearly enough, with the trimming of black lace.

"Blue and white; the fair girl with the pearls."

"No, no! all white. The dark girl in all white."

But above these latter rose the fast increasing murmur, "Black and gold; the lady in black and gold!"

"Ladies and gentlemen," said a good-natured, grey-haired officer, in colonel's uniform, "I propose that this knotty point be decided by taking the general sense of the meeting. I hear gentlemen around me expressing their opinions and partialities. Some say blue and white, others all white, others pink and white, not a few challenge comparison with a lady in dark crimson. Again, I hear around me cries of black and gold. Gentlemen, from these rival colours let us select the belle, and drink her health by name."

This proposal was received with a shout of approval, and amidst the sound of merry laughter and jingling of glasses the preliminaries were arranged.

Colonel Stodart, for such was the officer's name who proposed this ordeal of beauty, wrote down in succession on a piece of paper, the colours of the candidates who were proposed by their several admirers—blue, blue and white, all white, pink and black, pink, dark blue, and crimson. Lastly, came black and gold, the colours by which Lola Velasco was distinguished.

The result was not long in doubt. As the jovial colonel read out the colours one by one, the supporters of each held up their hands, and a rough guess was made by the judges as to the number and written down.

Each of those proposed as candidates for the envied

honour had a considerable number of admirers, but when Colonel Stodart in a sonorous tone proclaimed—

“Let all who are in favour of black and gold hold up their hands,” a perfect forest was held up, amidst a storm of applause, and shouts of “Black and gold for ever—the lady in the amber silk!”

Silence being proclaimed, the judge announced that the lady in the amber dress, with black lace trimmings, had borne off the palm of beauty. The honour of her name was requested, in order that her health, as queen of the festivities, might be duly drunk. Lola was, naturally enough, deeply embarrassed and confused; but Captain Herault took upon himself the office of champion, and rose to respond for her.

Gentlemen all, on behalf of this young lady—Mademoiselle Dolora Velasco—I beg to return thanks for the honour you have done her.”

Then the toast was drunk with great enthusiasm and noise, and Lola, the ex-slave girl, was duly inaugurated as the beauty of the assembly. She would have been more than woman had she not felt a thrill of pride and pleasure at this homage to her beauty, and once more the wish flitted across her mind—“Oh, that he were here to witness my triumph!”

“Mademoiselle Dolora Velasco, I drink to you, and congratulate you on the deserved pre-eminence your great beauty has won for you.”

It was the voice of Varley Fang, and turning quickly she saw him standing behind her, glass in hand, bowing obsequiously, but, she thought, with a singular mocking smile on his features.

She bowed coldly, and turning to her partner entered into conversation, feeling by no means inclined to bandy words with the man who, if he was not her enemy, would be if he dared.

Supper over, she made her way to Maude Glynne, whom, in the midst of her triumph, she had not forgotten.

“You look pale, tired, ill, dear Miss Glynne,” she said.

“Yes, dear, I am tired, but not ill. I shall not dance any more, but shall stroll about the cooler rooms and

the conservatory. I will find you out before the ball is over."

"Would you not like to go home now?"

"No, no," replied Maude, ever amiable, not wishing to deprive Lola of any pleasure; "I would rather remain. You have many engagements to dance, and it would not look well to fail in fulfilling them. See, here comes Captain Herault, to claim you for the first!"

Soon Lola was again amidst the giddy, whirling throng—flushed with excitement—her eyes beaming brightly—bosom heaving fast—feet flying, like little birds, over the polished floor, in full enjoyment of the merriment. It was Lola's first ball, and to her was a source of pleasure unknown and unexpected. The strains of the music melting on the air, the bright lights, variegated dresses and uniforms, the exhilarating exercise of dancing, the hum of conversation, the tinkling of silvery laughter—all made up a scene of pleasure and gaiety she had never before witnessed.

Then she could not be deaf to the praises bestowed on herself—blind to the admiration she excited.

The night waxed on, and yet the dancers kept up the festivities as though they would never be wearied. Lola, indeed, felt no trace of fatigue, but, carried away by the delirious excitement, could have danced for hours longer, she thought. Slowly, however, the rooms thinned, ere the first grey tints of dawn could be discerned in the east. Lola, panting with exertion, was walking slowly along the room, leaning on her partner's arm, when a gentleman in plain clothes, the same who had been speaking to Varley Fang, approached her.

"Are you not Mademoiselle Velasco?" he asked.

"Yes, assuredly."

"Then there is a messenger just arrived for you: yonder he stands, at the entrance to the room. They will not let him come in. You see him, do you not?—that black boy."

"Yes, I see; but a messenger for me—from whom!"

"I heard him say from Miss Glynne. She is unwell, I think."

This was enough for Lola. Her feet tripped lightly across

the floor, and the next moment she was standing before the boy with eager countenance.

"You have a message for me, boy—from Miss Glynne, is it? Speak quickly."

"Yes, missa—Missa Glynne tells you come quick. She very bad; go for die, I tink."

"Die! Good heavens! Where is she? What ails her?"

"She gone home in de carriage. De doctors say she berry bad; break someting inside, whar she hurt by knife."

"Who are you, boy?—who sent you?" asked Lola, a sudden gleam of suspicion crossing her mind at this message being brought by a stranger.

"I'se Massa Douglas' boy, missa. Old Jake, at de house, he my granfarder; bin to see him; an' de doctor he gib me a quarter to run tell you—Missa Velasco, he say."

"Go, get me a hack carriage, there's a good boy, and I will give you a dollar. Quick! I shall not be a minute putting my bonnet and shawl on."

Lola was not long, as she said; but when she hurried out to the vestibule, she found there the boy, but no conveyance.

"Dere no hack flies about; nuffin but a gentleman's private carriage, missa."

Lola gazed wildly around. It was as he said, and she knew not what to do. It seemed almost out of the question, passing through the streets alone and on foot at such an hour. Besides, she scarcely knew the road. Looking around to see if she could discover Captain Herault, or any gentleman with whom she was acquainted, her eye fell on the tall, dark person who had first apprised her of the message. He bowed, and advanced towards her.

"I have a close carriage waiting," he said. "As I understand you have just received intelligence of the illness of a friend, it is at your service."

Raising his hand as a signal, a small carriage, driven by a black coachman, came up.

"You will drive this lady where she wishes to go," he said to the man, as he opened the door and motioned for Lola to enter.

"Yes, sar."

"Now, young lady."

Lola hesitated for one moment, looked around, and then she got into the carriage. The door was banged to, and she was rapidly driven off. To her surprise, the man did not ask her where he was to drive her.

"I suppose he knows," she said to herself, and then, dismissing the subject from her mind, turned her thoughts to Maude Glynne, and wondered what could be the meaning of this sudden seizure.

* * * * *

A quarter of an hour later, Maude Glynne, whom Lola believed to have been taken dangerously ill, entered the ball-room and looked around, as though in search of Lola. Seeing Captain Herault, she went up to him.

"Can you tell me where I can find Mademoiselle Velasco?" she asked.

"Mademoiselle Velasco!" he said, in great surprise. "Why, she has gone home; she bade me a hurried good night, saying that you were unwell, and, having gone home first, had sent for her."

"I send for her! There must be some mistake. I have only been in the drawing-room talking over some business with Mr. Varley Fang."

Maude Glynne thought that the young officer must be mistaken, and searched all over the place for her friend—but in vain. She went to the supper-room, and called for her from the balcony, and in the conservatory. Then, going upstairs to the ladies' robing-rooms, she discovered that Lola had taken her bonnet and shawl. She must have gone home. "It is certainly very strange," she thought; and forthwith entered the carriage, and drove away.

But, arrived home, she learned, to her astonishment and dismay, that Lola had not returned. Old Jake was sitting up, having been installed as porter; but he had seen nothing of her.

Then Maude, really alarmed, hurried back to the ball-room. The last guests were departing, the lights were burning out, and the band was playing "The Bonnie Blue Flag!"—the Confederate national song.

But no Lola ! Vainly she searched for her, and vainly waited up at home till night passed away and the sun rose above the eastern swamp mists.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE BATTLE OF SHILOH.

WE left Hubert Glynne and his friends setting out for the Mobile and Ohio Railroad, *en route* for the seat of war in Tennessee. The progress of the newly enrolled regiment was like a triumphal march. They gathered recruits at every city and township they passed through, and the ranks of the "Louisiana Blazers"—for so the regiment was nicknamed—were quickly augmented to full strength.

Nothing could exceed the enthusiasm with which these warriors, going forth to battle, were received along the road. After traversing miles of vast pine forest and swamp, the train would stop for a short time at some rude village, called a town, numbering, perhaps, a thousand or so inhabitants. The flag was unfurled, and the wild yells of the volunteers quickly apprised the populace that the train carried troops bound for the battle-field.

Then ensued a scene of wild excitement—Bourbon whisky flowed like water—men shouted and yelled for the Confederacy like demons, waking up the quiet solitude of the place and scaring away the wild birds which, from their perches in the distant forest, wondered what all this meant.

"Hurrah for the Stars and Bars ! Rally for the Fiery Cross !" cried a colour-sergeant, waving the regimental standard. "Who'll cut in with us under this glorious bit o' blue silk ? Who'll join the Louisiana Blazers ?"

This was an appeal uniformly met and responded to ; and as the old Gulf State was left farther behind, and the scene of hostilities approached, so did the small force with which Hubert Glynne started from Valverde House swell to quite formidable proportions. The Louisiana Blazers numbered eleven hundred fighting men, who were divided into two battalions of five hundred and fifty each.

On the 3rd of April the regiment of the Fiery Cross arrived at the important town of Corinth, near which were concentrated the armies of Johnston and Beauregard. The enemy, under General Grant, occupied a position on the left bank of the Tennessee river, and an advance was contemplated by him so soon as he should be reinforced by General Buel, then approaching by rapid marches from Nashville. To prevent this, General Beauregard determined to press the issue without delay, and force a battle.

It was hoped that a rapid and vigorous attack on General Grant would beat him back to his transports, and compel him to abandon the west bank of the river. All troops arriving in Corinth were at once sent on to the army, and a splendid force it was. In discipline, enthusiasm for the cause, in the physique of the men, and in its able commanders, the Confederate army in the vicinity of Corinth was one of the most magnificent hitherto assembled by the Southerners. In numbers alone it was inferior to the Yankees, who already exceeded it nearly two to one, and would bear a still larger proportion when joined by General Buel.

On Thursday, the 3rd of April, the very day of the arrival of the regiment of the Fiery Cross in Corinth, General Beauregard began his movement of attack. The roads were heavy, however, and so he was delayed a whole day, and did not get into position before the enemy till Saturday night, the 5th of April. The enemy were constantly inspired by the momentary expectation of General Buel's arrival—Grant sending courier after courier to hurry him up.

The morning of the 6th of April was to usher in the scenes of a memorable battle and bloody triumph for the Confederates. Early in the morning, and before the sun had arisen, General Hardee advanced suddenly upon the enemy's camp opposite his position.

The Yankees were taken by surprise, and at first fled precipitately, leaving their breakfasts untouched for the benefit of the Southerners. Soon, however, they rallied their forces, and formed line of battle. Meanwhile the rebel troops pressed hotly on, formed in three lines; the front commanded by General Hardee, the centre by Bragg,

and the rear by General Polk. With the latter were the reserves, and Generals Beauregard and Johnston.

At a little after six o'clock the main body of the opposing forces met in the shock of battle. A tremendous fire of artillery did great havoc in the rebel ranks, threatening to sweep them from the face of the earth; but, heedless of this, the Southern soldiers pressed on with frantic yells, driving the enemy before them. Broken in ranks, the Yankees rallied behind trees and shrubs, only to be again charged and driven back.

The scene was one of sublime splendour. All along the line the musketry fire rolled and sputtered; the shrill rebel yell, mingled with the shriek of shells, and the hissing of bullets and hail of round shot made up a fearful din. Far up in the air shells burst into flame like meteors, leaving behind puffs of white smoke. All along the front of the battle the two white lines of musketry smoke rose and surged onwards as the Federals were slowly driven back by the desperate valour of the Confederates. Bullets sang through the air, whistling swiftly by, or striking into trees, fences, waggons, or, too often, alas! into men's bodies, with that peculiar dull "chuck" so indescribable to those who have never seen men fall in battle. The forest through which the rebels advanced was crowded with the bodies of the dead, foe and friend mingled, as the advance was pressed on, spite of the stubborn, step-by-step resistance of the enemy.

The irresistible attack by the rebel troops was compared by Beauregard to an Alpine avalanche. The enemy were driven back by a series of daring, desperate, and successful charges. The enemy were greatly superior in numbers and artillery, and of course the loss on the part of the attacking force was very heavy. As the day passed on the troops began to suffer dreadfully from fatigue and want of water. Nevertheless, the double line of the Confederates swept steadily on, closely followed by the third, which consisted of the reserve.

Viewing the scene from the eminence above were the generals commanding, Johnston and Beauregard. The advance of the troops resembled three waves of white smoke lined with fire. Resistlessly, like the surging tide, these

were pressed on, the enemy constantly and steadily being driven before them.

At about half-past two in the afternoon the enemy made a determined stand at their third camp, two having been already carried by the fierce rush of the Southern troops. This camp was on a rising ground, from the top of which the river could be commanded. It was hence an important point, as, if carried, the bluff beyond would also probably fall into the hands of the rebels, and then the transports and the opposite side of the river would be within cannon-shot. The sole hope of the Yankee general now lay in the hourly expected reinforcement under Buel, who was known to be rapidly advancing on the other side of the Tennessee.

The Yankees had neglected to fortify the bank, and had no batteries whatever to command the river, so that, if the rebels should seize the bluff, the crossing place and the transports would lie hopelessly at their mercy.

Beauregard, however, was in utter ignorance of this. Himself a careful general and skilful engineer, he could not imagine but that they would fortify so important a position by strong works and heavy guns. This state of affairs was the secret of the obstinate defence of the third camp by the Federals. All the troops which had not been in action were here posted, and every available man was sent up to contest the place. The rebels charged again and again, but were met with a terrible artillery and musketry fire, and, tired and almost exhausted, fell back after four desperate assaults.

Then came a lull in the storm of battle.

Johnston and Beauregard were sitting side by side on horseback, at a place where a good view of the whole field could be commanded.

"We must send up the reserves, general," said Johnston. "That place must be taken."

"We have very few troops not engaged," replied cautious Beauregard, looking around him.

"There are the Carolina regiments, a Georgian one, and two from Alabama."

"Not three thousand men in all."

"Hallo! who are these coming down the hill? I don't know them."

Both generals curiously regarded the newly arrived troops.

A strong regiment of at least eight hundred men was seen advancing in line, but in somewhat loose order. The flag, a large blue banner, with a device which could not be made out at once, was borne in the centre, and over the rattle of musketry at the front could be heard the measured sound of a song to a quick-step march.

"Whoever they are, they seem fresh and full of fight," said Johnston; and then, turning to an aide-de-camp, bade him ascertain what regiment it was, and hurry them up to him.

In a few minutes the officer returned, and, saluting, said: "It is a regiment of volunteers, general, from Louisiana; Colonel Hubert Glynne in command. They call themselves the regiment of the Fiery Cross; or the 'Louisiana Blazers,' as one big fellow with a drum and a plume of feathers informed me."

"A rough lot, by my word, but fresh and fine men. I'll lead them myself. Ride, and order them to double up, while I form these troops."

The reserves were quickly formed in close column, and marched down the hill into the sea of smoke, fire, and raging battle which again prevailed. Panting, dusty, but flushed with excitement, the Blazers came up immediately—as the general had said, "a rough lot, but full of fight."

There was our friend, Hubert Glynne, on horseback—his tall form erect, his face flushed, his eye beaming with enthusiasm and eager desire to be at the foe.

Captain George, too, who had command of the 4th company, marched on, quiet and determined in mien, but his eyes, too, beaming with excitement at the sound of the rattling volleys and shrill battle yells which now rang out loud and fierce, as again the rebel troops rushed to the assault.

Darby Kelly, too, was there, banging away on a drum and shouting the chorus of the song with more energy than musical correctness.

There, too, might be seen many of those Southern gentlemen who were assembled around Hubert Glynne's hospitable board on the memorable night of the uprising of the Fiery Cross.

The men were in all varieties of costume and uniform, but mostly armed with tolerable rifles—some in the now well known and historical “butter-nut” of the Confederate armies, some clad in grey, others in shirts and pants only, but all strong, vigorous, and madly anxious to meet the hated and despised foe. Most of them had come all the way from far-distant Louisiana to cross bayonets with the Yankees, and now that the roll of musketry and the fierce yells of the combatants fell on their ears, their eagerness could scarcely be restrained.

“Halt! Silence! Form line.”

It is the voice of gallant General Johnston, who, waving his sword, prepares to lead them on to victory.

CHAPTER XXVII.

GLORIOUS WAR!

“SOLDIERS of Louisiana, I am about to lead you against the enemy. See yonder entrenched camp, against which our troops have for more than an hour dashed themselves in vain. I will lead you on. It shall be your glorious task to plant your flag on the fort. Follow me! The Fiery Cross to the front!”

Johnston well knew how to inflame the ardour of his men, and, by his own reckless bravery and the enthusiasm he communicated to them, lead them on to where success seemed almost impossible.

A frantic yell greeted this address, and so fierce was the excitement, that the ranks were with difficulty kept.

“Steady, men, steady!” shouted cautious Beauregard; and then, turning to General Polk, who was by his side, said sadly—a melancholy smile stealing over his pale, handsome face—

“Ah, general, it is sad to think how, in less than a quarter of an hour, many of those lusty fellows, now cheering so vociferously, will be giving vent to the death-cry, writhing in agony, or sleeping the last sleep!”

“Steady, men! Quick march!”

Then adown the slope the blue banner with the Fiery Cross is borne—the line swaying and uncertain—all advancing at a pace nearer a run than a march.

See! the new regiment plunges in among the forest trees—the line still wavering, from the too great eagerness of some, but they advance steadily, and swift as a mountain torrent.

“If they get up to the fort, only a hundred or two of them, by heavens they’ll carry it with a rush!” said Beauregard. Even he, usually so cool and circumspect, was a little bit exhilarated at the splendid dash with which the Fiery Cross regiment plunged into the thick of the fight.

Behold them, as they emerge on to the battle-field!

They pass scores of dead and wounded, and stragglers and remnants of regiments once more repulsed. The hissing bullets now sing all around them, as the advancing body attracts the enemy’s attention. Then comes the howl and rush of shell, and ere many seconds men are seen to stagger and fall. Great gaps are torn in the ranks by the round shot and grape, and still the blue flag is borne on to the front. Wreathed in clouds of smoke and dust, in a hollow ground, they are for a while invisible, but once again the Fiery Cross is seen emerging, and pressing towards the hardly contested position.

Glorious old Johnston, leading the charge, received a musket ball in the leg—the shock nearly throwing him from the saddle. Hubert Glynne, who was near him, ran up and asked—

“Are you hurt, general? Shall I send some of my men with you to the rear?”

“Not a man, sir, not a man. Forward! A d——d Yankee bullet has inflicted a flesh wound, that is all. To the right wheel. Forward, my brave men!”

This manœuvre caused them to advance in a diagonal line, so as to flank the defence, which the eagle eye of Johnston had discovered to be only what is called a “redan”—that is, a work quite open at the gorge.

Captain George, who, at the head of his company marched immediately behind the general, saw him sway in his saddle like a drunken man. Furthermore, the English-

man noticed that a constant stream of blood was pouring from the boot of his left leg. He ran forward, and, catching the horse's bridle, cried—

“General, go to the rear—you are wounded and bleeding.”

“No, no; I will lead you on. Forward!” he again shouted.

“General, you are pale as death, and faint from loss of blood. If the troops see you fall from your saddle, it will dispirit them.”

“Sir, you are right; I thank you. Only a flesh wound—only a flesh wound! but I do feel a little weak.”

Then, turning to the advancing troops, he waved his sword, and cried, as loud as his failing strength would allow—

“Forward, my brave men! You have the enemy in flank; my presence is required elsewhere. Charge! for the Fiery Cross!”

Putting spurs to his horse he rode away, not towards the rear, but along the line, across the thickest of the fire. He would not allow the men to think he was going to retreat, even if wounded.

Captain George watched him, and saw him reel to and fro in the saddle.

“He will fall! he will fall!” he muttered; but the next moment the general was enveloped in smoke, and the Blazers pressed on at a run to the assault of the redan.

Five minutes after that the Fiery Cross was borne triumphantly to the breastwork.

At the same time Governor Harris, who was acting as volunteer aide-de-camp, rode up to Johnston in another part of the field. The wounded general was bending over his saddle, swaying to and fro.

“Are you hurt?”

To which the now dying hero replied—

“Yes; and I fear mortally!”

Then, stretching out both arms to his friend, he fell from his horse, and in a few minutes expired.

What made the loss of this impetuous and splendid general the more grievous was the fact that he died from want of surgical attendance. Had he ridden to the rear

when first wounded, he might certainly have been saved. A small artery had been cut by the bullet, and he lost his life through his own abiding gallantry.

At the moment that the Louisiana Blazers rushed at the flank and rear of the enemy's breastwork, another regiment assaulted it in front. This latter was received with so terrible a fire from a battery of grape on an eminence behind that they recoiled, leaving half their number strewn in and about the fort.

Hubert Glynne's men dashed across the parapet and swarmed into the fort a few seconds after, and were received with a volley of musketry, but rushed on with the bayonet. A hand to hand struggle of a desperate nature now commenced, for the troops defending the fort were Western men, the flower of the Federal armies.

The rush of the wiry, bronzed, impetuous Southerners was met by the stubborn valour of young backwoodsmen and "Far-West" farmers. Yells of mutual defiance rent the air, but, as fresh Southerners poured in, the Yankee troops were forced back. Still the resistance was desperate, and more than one Louisiana man fell transfixed by Western bayonet.

While this desperate fight for possession of the fort was still raging, our friend the Englishman beheld the two guns at the rear about to open fire. He shouted to Glynne—

"Colonel—Hubert, look at those guns! For Heaven's sake, let me take them with my company. They will pour grape into us in a minute."

"Blaze away, old boy! Take two companies, if you like," Hubert shouted above the din.

"No, no; only one. I know all my own men."

Then leaping on an ammunition barrel, he shouted to his company, calling many of them by name—

"Number 4 Company, to your captain! My blackbeard beauties! Follow me! Hurrah for the Fiery Cross!"

While the fight was still raging, he managed to collect some twenty men, and with these prepared to charge the guns. It was a desperate venture, but was imperatively necessary, or all would soon be involved in ruin and destruction. With a shout, he led the way to the assault, at

the very moment that the two guns poured a shattering volley of grape into the now dense mass of rebel troops filling the fort. A few more such discharges would certainly empty it thoroughly, so great was the havoc and slaughter.

The Yankees recovered some yards of ground, owing to the confusion and loss caused among the rebels. It now seemed that the latter would be beaten out of the position, which was almost won. Still waged the dreadful conflict—Yankee and rebel—rebel and Yankee—death-cries and shouts of rage all mingling together. There was but little musketry firing now—the dull boom of the cannon in other parts of the field, and the infernal din caused by some four hundred men being mixed up together in a hand-to-hand fight, making an uproar even more deafening than the heaviest fire.

Shout, Yankee! Yell, rebel! Whirl round your clubbed musket, gaunt Western pioneer! Dash forward, wiry Southerner, with savage energy and desperation!

Grapple and stab—curse, foam, and yell mutual defiance! Fight and writhe, even in the death-agony, ye wounded! Ho! for the fiery Southerners! see how they fling themselves again and again on the foe. Bravely fought, Yankee soldiers! Stubborn as rocks; but, like the very rocks, wearing away under the constant dashing of the furious sea.

Hurrah for the Stars and Bars! A cheer for the Stars and Stripes! See the blue flag, the Fiery Cross, waving and fluttering—ever pressing on to the front.

Hark!

Two reports of cannon at close quarters—the screaming rush of grapeshot, tearing its way through a dense mass of struggling men. Many are literally torn to pieces by the close and deadly discharge, and then there ensues a sudden lull, and the combatants see—the rebels with exultation, the Yankees with dismay—that the two guns have been captured, and turned on the defenders of the redan.

About the guns lay some dozen or fifteen men slain in the assault, while the pieces themselves were served by Confederate soldiers, under the command of a Confederate officer—our friend, Captain George, the Englishman

A Yankee colonel, bareheaded, blood pouring down his face, perceives the cause of the unexpected slaughter, and shouts—

“The guns ! the guns ! Follow me, some of you ! We must retake the guns—the day is ours !”

Soon he collects some fifty men, who sally with him from the gorge, and prepare to assault those deadly cannon.

“Hurrah for Little Rhode Island and the Stars and Stripes !”

The colonel is a native of that small State, and as brave an officer as any in the Federal army.

“Charge, my bully boys ! the day is ours—the rebels are licked !” he cried, running in advance, encouraging his men.

He was a fine fellow, in the prime of life, tall and powerful, and the men seemed to follow him willingly.

Scarcely were the words “the rebels are licked” out of his mouth, than a wounded man of Captain George’s company, lying apparently lifeless close to his feet, threw himself on his knees by a vigorous effort, at the same moment grasping his rifle and bayonet, which lay close by.

“Licked, eh ? the —— they are !”

And with the words he drove his bayonet clean through the unfortunate Yankee’s body. The Rhode Island colonel fell back mortally wounded, as he did so, however, cutting viciously at his slayer. His men, seeing his fall, rushed forward with shouts of rage, and the wounded rebel was soon assailed by half a dozen of them. His left ankle was broken, which prevented him from rising, but, nevertheless, he fought desperately. They swarmed over him and around him, like a pack of hungry wolves over their prey. The rebel soon succumbed under many stabs ; but he died, like the hunted fox, silently, fighting tooth and nail to the last.

The delay caused by this avenging of their chief was disastrous to his followers. The Englishman, who had captured and now commanded the guns, had loaded again quietly, but with the practised dexterity and speed of a man who had before worked artillery. Both pieces were trained on the group below—scarce thirty yards from these field-pieces loaded to the muzzle with grape shot. Both were fired together, and the effect was not only disastrous to, but absolute annihilation of, the assailants, who, after the death

of their colonel, vacillated, and seemed to be at a loss what to do.

The shot tore in among them, and in an instant there lay a heap of bleeding, mutilated humanity, where before had been some score or so of strong men. Crowded up in a cluster as they were, the cruel grape did not even spare one, and amidst the groans of the wounded, the two pieces were rapidly re-loaded, and again ready for service. But it was no longer necessary; the conflict had been decided by this last disaster—the total destruction of those who had volunteered to retake the guns which had before played such havoc among the Confederates.

Yelling like demons, the Louisiana Blazers hurled themselves on the now dispirited foe, who retreated, not altogether in disorder, but still was, in the space of a moment, driven out of the redan.

To take it again was a hopeless task, and the scattered defenders fell back up the brow of the hill, keeping up a sullen fire from tree to tree.

The capture of this position virtually decided the battle of Shiloh—one of the most sanguinary, considering the numbers engaged, in the whole war.

Although after this affair there was a lull in the roar of battle, there was still work to be done. The Confederate troops collected their wounded and sent them to the rear, and halted awhile to rest. This latter was indeed absolutely necessary; for the fatigue incident on so many hours' hard fighting, to say nothing of the excitement, was such as to cause many a strong man to throw himself on the earth, panting, and all but exhausted.

The scene at the redan fort, where the fierce combat had raged, was an awful one. On the earthen parapet, in the ditch, and beyond, lay many dead and wounded; while within the narrow space the bodies of the dead and wounded lay so thickly as to cover the ground—at places lying in heaps one above another.

The wounded were quickly removed, and the dead left sole possessors of the scene of conflict. There they lay, Yankee and rebel, in every conceivable attitude. Some lying calm and peaceful, others with limbs twisted and features distorted with agony—some with their faces to the

ground, in which they had dug their fingers in the last throes; others staring blindly at the sky—some with great wounds torn in their bodies by the dreadful grape; others pierced by keen bayonet, showing no visible mark.

At the place where the Rhode Island colonel had fallen was a great cluster of dead splashed with blood, and many of the corpses horribly mutilated. The unfortunate officer lay upon his back—his dead right hand still grasping his sword. On him, as he had fallen, pierced by many wounds, lay the rebel who had slain him. On the latter's face there was a fierce, defiant look—the teeth were bared, the brow knit, and the right hand tightly grasped the throat of an enemy whose bayonet had pierced him, and who had a moment after been hurled senseless over the rebel by the discharge of the guns. A whole pile of dead lay over and around those three corpses, in every variety of attitude. There they lay—victor and vanquished, rebel and Yankee—the fierce fighting spirits, a while back animating their breasts, torn from the mutilated bodies, and sent to their long home.

At that very moment a fair young wife in happy Rhode Island knelt and prayed to the King of Heaven to watch over and guard from all danger her patriot hero-husband. He had gone forth from home a month ago, burning with enthusiasm and military ardour, and now he lay in his blood, stiff and stark, slain by the hand of an unknown rebel.

And what of this latter—that fierce Southerner who, wounded, slew an enemy, and, overpowered, fought wolf-like to the last? Ah! he, too, has loving ones far away in fertile Georgia, who pray for him night and morning, and many times oftener. The only son of a widowed mother—only brother of a charming sister—he went to the wars, burning with hatred and excitement against the invaders of his country, and though a rich man, he took service as a simple private, and so, gloriously battling to the last against his country's foes, he died.

Peace to their souls, all—Yankees and rebels—and may their soldier bodies have honourable burial!

Captain George, the Englishman, after the fierce combat was over, walked down to inspect the captured work. He paused for a moment, and surveyed the dreadful scene—his

eye sweeping slowly over the small expanse on which so many corpses had been stretched, and all in so short a time. A comparative silence reigned around. The desultory crack of the skirmishers' rifles seemed but as the ticking of a clock after the late uproar. Clouds of smoke drifted lazily about over the field, as though willing to veil the horrors there collected.

Mingled with the smell of powder, there arose on the sultry afternoon air a faint sickly odour—the taint of human blood!

“So this is war—glorious war!” he soliloquized; “the carnival of death!”

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A LOST OPPORTUNITY.

AFTER a very short pause some of the rebel troops pressed on after the retreating enemy. The sharp-shooters and skirmishers went first, and following them, slowly and wearily worn, came the rebel regiments. The Yankees retreated to the bluff, made a brief stand there, and, utterly dispirited and worn out, hurried down in confusion to the river bank.

By degrees the Confederate officers and men recovered from the collapse—that reaction caused by the recent fierce fight and victory—and again the advance is briskly urged. Captain George obtains permission from Colonel Hubert Glynn to bring along the two captured guns, which are dragged in triumph up the hill.

From the bluff, at the top, a view can be obtained of the river. On the near bank is a vast crowd of Yankee troops; some of them in the direst disorder, and many pressing into the transports, which the officers endeavour to get out into the stream, so as to prevent a panic rush. Fresh rebel troops arrive at the top of the hill, and soon a line is formed to advance and utterly rout, capture, or drive into the river the defeated enemy, now obviously demoralized.

With the two guns there is plenty of ammunition—round shot, shell, and grape.

"Round shot and shell!" cried Captain George, as, bare-armed, smoke-grimed, and splashed with blood, he loaded and rammed home. "No more grape! I have noticed there is nothing like big shot to pitch into a crowded mob of men. If the aim is good, it kills just as many, and frightens the rest a good deal more. A small grapeshot is like a musket bullet; it may kill a couple of men, and their comrades not see where they are hit. But it's different with round shot; when those boys come plunging into a crowd, they make themselves felt and heard. A screaming rush, a dull shock, and a dozen dismembered bodies is the result; and those who are not hit are dashed about and smothered in the blood of their comrades. There!"—and as he spoke he fired the piece, the shot from which plunged among the mass of fugitives by the river bank, creating dire confusion and dismay.

"Load away, my boys! load away! We'll give them a quarter of an hour of this fun, and then charge. Hurrah for the Fiery Cross! Fire!"

Bang went the two guns again, almost simultaneously, and at the short half-mile range. All down hill the shot took terrible effect.

"Now, men, fall in. Keep your ranks. Forward! March!"

With these words Hubert Glynn leads the Louisiana Blazers down the hill to attack the foe. Immediately afterwards the whole front division, under General Hardee, pressed on, and, some more guns coming up, the utter destruction of the Yankee army seemed inevitable. As the troops advanced they opened fire every few paces, and the bullets, as well as the shot and shell, fell among the Yankees by the river side. The officers of these latter rallied some few regiments, and presented a front to the advancing victorious foe; but it was patent to every one that they could not now stem the torrent.

At this moment victory seemed most certain—complete victory, accompanied by the utter destruction or surrender of the enemy. Further to the left, there were other positions, and some Yankee troops still unbroken; but these were quickly carried, and a little before six o'clock the enemy was driven out of his last position, and the whole Yankee army fell back in confusion on the river.

And now the whole Yankee force in Tennessee was certainly in the grasp of the victorious rebels. It wanted but one well-delivered blow, and all would be over. Buel (some of whose advanced cavalry could be made out on the other bank) was too late, and the boastful foe lay utterly at the mercy of the despised rebels.

Captain George had just delivered a farewell volley from the captured guns, and was about to leave a guard with them and rejoin the regiment, now steadily advancing down hill, when a bugle-call fell on his ear.

He listened, scarcely believing it could be so.

Again it is repeated. It is the "Cease firing," and "Halt!"

"Halt at such a moment! It is madness—a mistake!" and so he forms his men in column, and is about leading them down the hill, when an aide-de-camp gallops up.

"Halt, and fall back for orders!" he cries to Captain George's company. "Where is the rest of your regiment, sir?"

"Advancing against the enemy, and I am about to join them. We have just been giving the Yankces a few 'blue pills' from the captured guns."

"You will halt your men, sir! General Beauregard has ordered the troops to encamp in the captured cantonments of the enemy."

Halt! Refuse the cup of victory so temptingly offered to the lips! It seemed incredible. Alas! it was too true; and aide-de-camp after aide-de-camp carried the fatal orders which saved the Yankee army from annihilation.

The substantial fruits of this victory were immense. The rebels were in possession of all the enemy's encampments, nearly all his field artillery, about thirty flags, over three thousand prisoners, including General Prentiss; thousands of small arms, an immense supply of forage and munitions of war.

The army of the enemy was well provided in every respect in the morning, and at night completely stripped of everything on the battle-field.

The captured General Prentiss did not hesitate to acknowledge to Beauregard: "You have whipped our best troops to-day!"

The battle took place, like many other great ones, on a Sunday. At night, General Beauregard established his head-quarters at the little church of Shiloh, from which place the battle took its name.

The troops should have slept on their arms in the enemy's excellent cantonments, but instead thereof, the greater part robbed themselves of sleep in order to hunt after the spoils. The possession of the rich camp of the enemy seemed to have utterly demoralized them.

Both armies were now in a critical position. Beauregard hoped, from information he had received, that General Buel had been delayed in his march from Columbia, and that his main force could not reach the scene in time to save the remainder of Grant's army from destruction on the following day.

The situation of General Grant was one of extreme peril. The reserve line of the Federals was entirely gone. Their whole army was crowded into a circuit of about half a mile around the landing-place. They had been falling back all day, and the next attack would most certainly have driven them into the river; they had not transports enough to cross a single division before the Confederates would be upon them.

At the lull in the firing and the stoppage of the advance, caused by Beauregard's orders, they thought that the enemy were preparing for the grand final rush which should crown the day's success.

When General Grant knew that the pursuit had been called off, his exultation scarce knew any bounds. His anxiety was suddenly confessed, and he exclaimed—

"To-morrow they will be exhausted, and then we will go at them with Buel's fresh troops."

He was right as to Buel. A body of his advance cavalry was already there, waiting transportation across. In the morning, amid the leaves and undergrowth, the gleaming of gun-barrels was seen. It was the first division of Buel, which was hailed with tremendous cheers by the defeated Federals.

That night, as we have said, the victorious rebels bivouacked in the enemy's camp. Despite the terrible fatigues and dangers of the day, a great number of the

troops devoted the whole night to plunder, and, as a consequence, were utterly worn out and unfit for duty in the morning.

The men of the Fiery Cross regiment, as a rule, offered an exception, and camped some hundred yards from the redan fort they had so gallantly carried. They found in the enemy's tents abundance of excellent coffee, beef, pork, butter, cheese, biscuit, and sugar, and so fared sumptuously.

The gallant Louisiana Blazers had lost two hundred men out of eight hundred who went into action, and the battle flag, the blue banner, having thereon emblazoned the Fiery Cross, was torn in many places by bullets and shell splinters.

Our friends Captain George and Hubert Glynne occupied a tent commanding a view of the whole battle-field, over which a young moon cast a feeble light. Darby Kelly and Jupiter had prepared an excellent supper for themselves and their officers, and now lay fast asleep in front of the bivouac fire. Captain George and Hubert Glynne sat and smoked, and conversed gloomily on the events of the day.

"It is too bad, Hubert, after such a fight, not to have reaped the full fruit of it. I mean I could, with the aid of those two field guns, have captured the whole Yankee army with a single regiment. Army! it was not an army; only a mob—a scared and frightened crowd."

"Never mind, my boy, we shall have them to-morrow; we will finish the work then."

"To-morrow? By then the enemy may be joined by thousands of fresh troops. To-morrow! to-morrow!—I hate the sound of the word. To me it is redolent with broken promises and lost opportunities. I almost wish I hadn't come."

"What! miss such a glorious victory as this!" his friend cried, in surprise. "And you, too, who have come through it without a scratch! Besides, you are certain to get a colonelcy. I heard General Hardee say to Major Slocum, that the little fort was won solely through your capturing the two guns and turning them on the enemy."

"Well, it might have had something to do with it, certainly; but still it is unsatisfactory to know that, after a fellow has risked his life and helped to win such a victory,

we have been called off when we could have captured the whole army, or, rather, horde!"

"Well, well, old boy; take a drain of Bourbon whisky, and forget all about it."

"Hallo! here comes some one," cried Captain George; "I heard your name, Hubert."

The next minute a young man, wrapped in a military cloak, strode up, and so soon as the fire-light fell on his face, Hubert Glynne started up and warmly welcomed him.

"Jack Pinner, of Starcross Plantation, by Jove! I'm glad to see you, old boy! When did you come?"

"To-night I arrived here, having heard the sounds of the battle from Corinth. I left New Orleans five days after you; so, you see, I have made good speed. How are all our fellows?"

"Grey and George Hall are killed," said Hubert, sadly; "Herman, Scott, and Merrivale badly wounded. We have lost, besides, about two hundred rank and file in the battle."

"By thunder! I wish I had been here. I had to inquire my way to find you, and heard your praises sounded in every direction. Every soldier I asked had a word of praise for the Louisiana Blazers, and several officers told me that you carried a fort which had repulsed a dozen assaults, and that, in fact, this won the battle."

"Won the battle! Yes," put in Captain George, "it is true the day is ours—in proof whereof we now occupy the enemy's camp; but it is a fruitless victory—a barren triumph."

"But to-morrow all will be completed. We shall go at the enemy fresh and full of fight," said Hubert.

"Fresh and full of fight! look before you, and listen!" and, so saying, the Englishman pointed to the Yankee camp lying lower down the slope of the hill, and more to the right; "it is for this camp we fought so hard; for the possession of this ground on which we now are we battled for more than an hour. Many a brave fellow whom we could ill spare is now cold and stark in death. Better we had not won at all than that the men should devote the night to pillage and plunder."

Neither Hubert Glynne nor his newly arrived friend could dispute the fact that a scene of riot and wild confusion was being enacted in the cantonments, at the outskirts of which they then were. Thousands of the soldiery had thrown off all discipline, had left the ground marked out for the camping-place of their regiments, and had wandered away to where were the baggage-waggon and stores—there all was riotous confusion and indiscriminate plunder. A considerable quantity of Bourbon whisky was found, and those who did not avail themselves of the opportunity and get gloriously drunk, were engaged in carrying off to their tents all the most valuable and available articles the Yankees had left behind them. All through the night this carnival of licence and plunder continued, and when the bugles sounded the morning *réveille*, many of the soldiers who had won that hard-contested field were dead drunk—many more were utterly worn out through want of needful rest.

Wrapped in their cloaks and blankets, Hubert Glynne, Captain George, and Jack Pinner slept around the camp fire—feet to the blaze—such a sleep as only those worn out by fatigue and excitement can enjoy. In close proximity, but on the lower side, lay Darby Kelly and Jupiter, the faithful negro, also asleep. The arms of each lay by his side, and Hubert Glynne's horse was picketed close by, while the young colonel's head rested on the saddle.

The moon went down; the fire waxed low, and thus, on the field they had so hotly contended for, with dead enemies and fallen friends close around them, our friends passed the night, nor woke till the bugle's blast gave notice that it was time to be up and stirring.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE PLOT TO CARRY OFF LOLA.

WHILE Jupiter was preparing coffee, Darby Kelly cleaned the officers' swords and wiped the dew from the rifle barrels. Then, fresh wood having been piled on the fire, they sat, and, sipping the hot coffee, discoursed of the past day and

the prospects of the one before them. Captain George maintained that the only course which could lead to a happy ending was an immediate and vigorous advance. Perhaps then the victory of the preceding day might be consummated by the total destruction of the enemy ere his reinforcements could arrive.

Sharp and clear the bugle calls rang out over the field as the *réveille* of the different regiments was sounded—a summons which was in many instances totally disregarded: the men lying utterly worn out, or in a drunken stupor. Vain were the efforts of the regimental and divisional commanders to muster their troops round their standards, and the result being reported to General Beauregard, he ordered that the troops should be allowed two hours more rest, and that at the expiration of that time spirits should be served out. It was unfortunate, but unavoidable.

The enemy, doubtless in momentary fear of attack, heard the rebel *réveilles*, and in reply strained every nerve to get their troops in fighting array and re-animate their spirits. Buel's army had arrived and crossed the river, and were, of course, received with enthusiasm—the ringing cheers which greeted the welcome reinforcement were plainly audible to our three friends, as they sat round the camp fire.

Hubert Glynn had satisfied himself that the greater part of his men were ready for duty, and having given the order for them to lie by their arms, had rejoined his friends.

"Hark how the Yankees are shouting and cheering!" said Captain George; "that means heavy reinforcements, I am sure."

"I fear so; however, when we attack, it may fairly be hoped that the memory of yesterday's thrashing may make them disinclined to meet us."

As they talked, the grey morning mist slowly lifted, and revealed the whole of the encampment and field of battle. The enemy could not be seen except by the sentries and outposts, for they lay by the river bank, over the crest of the hill; but the whole rebel army could be discerned, lying, the most of them in heavy sleep, around the respective standards of their regiments.

The Yankee camp presented a scene of direful confusion, evidencing how busy the marauders had been during the night. Waggon^s lay overturned, the contents of the barrels and cases strewn abroad in wasteful disorder; tents were overthrown, and many thousand dollars' worth of provisions and clothing lay scattered around. Arms, accoutrements, and ammunition lay about, while horses and mules wandered to and fro, in company with a few stragglers not yet satisfied with plunder.

Around, on the slopes of the hills, and amidst the forest trees, lay the legions of unburied dead—unnoticed and uncared for; for, be it observed, the stern realities of war make the living very callous as to the disposal of the dead.

Presently, as Hubert Glynne and his friend Jack Pinner conversed over their coffee and pipes, some words were let fall by the late arrival which caused the Englishman to prick up his ears and listen more attentively.

"Yes; I don't like that fellow, Varley Fang," said Pinner. "I overheard a conversation between his overseer, Jabez Hack, and mine—who, by the way, is now differently provided for."

"Well, for my part, I neither know nor care much about Fang. He's not a man I should ever choose as a friend; otherwise I am quite indifferent to him and his doings. It is strange, though, what feelings, of dislike and suspicion he arouses in some people. Here is my friend, Captain George, hates him like poison, and fully believes he is up to some villanous scheme."

"Believe!—I am quite certain of it."

"Captain George!" exclaimed Pinner; "Is that your name, sir?"

"That is how I am called in this country, sir."

"Then I have heard of you—saw a friend of yours only the other day—Gerald Leigh, of Virginia."

"Gerald Leigh! where is he, then? I left him in Charleston."

"He was in Mobile a few days ago. He has been wounded in a reconnaissance, and is on sick leave."

"Gerald Leigh in Mobile!" exclaimed the Englishman. "I almost wish I had not come west. I want particularly to see him."

"Well, you may get wounded and join him—who knows?—it is the fortune of war," said Jack Pinner, lightly.

George was silent for some little time, and then, suddenly, while the others were talking of something else, interrupted—

"But what were you saying of Varley Fang's overseer, sir?"

"Oh, I had forgotten. I had occasion to go down to my fellow's hut one night, and heard him talking in a loud voice. I must say I was considerably struck by the subject of their conversation, though I couldn't understand it."

"Of what were they talking?"

"Of some girl whom Jabez had been commissioned to carry off."

"Did they mention her name?" asked the Englishman, eagerly.

"Not once."

"Ah! just oblige me by repeating, as nearly as you can remember, what you heard."

"Certainly—perhaps you will be able to explain all about it; I must confess that I couldn't make it out. Jabez Hack was speaking when I came up to the hut. 'Now look here,' he said, 'this is a right down good thing, and you may just as well cut in as that cussed Hyæna.' 'What's the amount o' dollars to be made?' 'Wall, by the gal business you could clear a pretty good pile, I tell yer; and if yer like to enter the other big swim, I'll make it right wi' the boss, and we'll take it out o' the hands o' the cussed niggers, Hyæna and Sandy-wi'-the-Hump.' 'What's the figger, I tell ye again?' 'Wall, by the second bit o' bizness, I'll lay my life we'd clear ten thousand dollars apiece, besides lots o' pickings arter the Yankees ha' got the town.'"

"Got the town!" interrupted Hubert Glynne. "Got what town?"

"Ah! that I scarcely know; but it seemed to me that they must be talking of New Orleans."

"Of New Orleans! but what the blazes could he mean? What can he know about the projected capture of the city? We all know that the Yankees have tried it before,

and may, *perhaps*, again; though it is not likely, I think."

"Don't you see, Hubert," Captain George said, earnestly, "that this fellow, Jabez Hack, is privy to a plot of some kind, by which the capture of the city might be rendered easy."

"Easy! but how can it be?—it seems to me impossible. Even if their fleet should pass the big forts, there are plenty of batteries up the river. But they never can pass the forts and obstructions."

"Possibly not. At all events, it appears clear to me that treachery is at work, and that they will attempt it. Go on with your narrative, sir."

"Well, they talked on, my man seeming to fight rather shy, Jabez Hack urging him on all the while, declaring several times that it was too good a thing for 'two cussed niggers,' and that nothing but his dislike to undertake the thing with Hyæna Jones—(your slave, I believe, Hubert Glynne)—caused him to decline in the first place. 'Wall, but how about the dollars?' asked my man, fervently; 'who's to guarantee the coin?' 'That's all right; my boss'll be answerable.' 'Ah, yes, that's all very well; but how do I know that your boss mayn't turn round arter we've done the work and laugh at us?' 'No fear,' replied Jabez; 'he durs'nt do it. We've got him tight. He belongs to this Fiery Cross affair, and to my knowledge is frightened out of his life. He've had a warning a'ready, and will be very careful. If he was to fight queer, all I should have to do would be to acquaint some of 'em.'"

Captain George interrupted,—

"It's quite true about his having had a warning—I myself asked a friend of mine (and of yours, also, Hubert) to keep an eye on Mr. Fang, and caution him in a mysterious manner. It was young Nicholson I so requested, and I don't doubt for a moment he has done so."

"What, in the name of wonder, did you do that for?"

"Because I felt and do feel as certain as that the sun is now rising that Varley Fang is up to mischief. I believe he has got designs against that handsome slave girl of yours, in the first place."

"What, Lola?" cried Hubert, an angry flush mounting to his face.

"Yes, Lola: no one else."

"By heavens! if I thought so——"

"Well, you may think so," replied the Englishman, coolly; "however, it is somewhat late to threaten now. If you remember, I tried to make you think so before, but you pooh-poohed it altogether. Go on with your story, sir."

Jack Pinner proceeded—

"'Besides,' said Jabez Hack, 'we'd have all the pull of him. That business of the gal would put him in our power right up to the neck. I know he's desperate smitten, and means gittin' her. But if it were known, there'd be —— to pay. The gal's got friends—her missis is fond o' her, and I reckon my boss wouldn't care to meet her boss if it were known he'd took away his gal by force.' 'Wall, you say this gal business is to be done first.' 'Yes, an' we can cop the dollars same night.' 'Wall, seems to me there's no harm in tryin' the first job; I'll see how that works, if you like; and then mebbe I'll go into the other with you.' 'That's settled, then,' Jabez replied. 'Right yer are! but when's it to come off?' 'Ah! that I can't tell yet. We're watching the girl now; but she's as artful as a coon, and suspects. The boss has got his eye on her, and as soon as she's off her guard we'll nail her. We must be in New Orleans every night without fail. We may "get the lightning" to the job any day.' 'Very wall: then I'll meet you at old Rosy's shant on the Level every night—or you can hear of me——'

"They made a move after this," said Jack Pinner, "and I, not wishing to let them know I'd overheard, walked away too. Besides, I wanted to think over it, and try and puzzle out the meaning; but may I be shot if my thick head could make either head or tail of what I'd heard. You, sir, however, seem to be pretty certain you can understand it."

"I feel quite sure I'm right. I wish I was in New Orleans. Those two scoundrels——Excuse me for calling your overseer a scoundrel, sir."

"Don't apologize—you can't have a worse opinion of him than I have," interrupted Pinner. "I know what you were

going to say--that those two scoundrels will certainly carry out their projected villany. I've made one of them all safe, anyhow."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, this: I had long suspected my man of robbing me. I sent for him to New Orleans, having first provided myself with the necessary proof. Then I demanded to know what it was he and Jabez Hack were talking about. He refused to tell me, and was insolent to boot. So I had him arrested on the charge of robbery, and he's now breaking stones in New Orleans gaol."

"Bravo!" cried Hubert Glynn. "That has made all safe."

"Safe!" said Captain George. "Nonsense; you forget that accursed mulatto of yours--Hyena Jones."

"So I did! Upon my soul I wish I had hung him before I came away, for his participation in the revolt. I am sure he deserved it."

"I wish you had with all my heart. There's mischief brewing," replied Captain George, "and, furthermore, I wish--" He hesitated, and thereon Hubert pressed him.

"Well, I wish I was back in New Orleans."

Jack Pinner rose, and began buckling on his sword, and making other preparatives for a move.

"Look here, old fellow," said Hubert, suddenly, and with emphasis; "we're going into action again presently. Promise me this: that if anything happens to me you will return to New Orleans the instant you honourably can, and watch and guard over my sister; also protect the girl Lola from the evil designs of her enemies. I begin to be of your way of thinking. Will you promise?"

"I promise most solemnly."

They shook hands, and scarcely had they done so than the sound of firing was heard over the ridge, and in a very short space the pickets and sentries came running in with the news that the enemy were advancing in force.

The Yankees, largely reinforced by fresh troops, and finding they were not attacked themselves, assumed the offensive, and soon their heavy columns were mounting the incline, feebly resisted by the outposts and skirmishing line.

The bugle blasts sounded all over the field, and thus aroused by the insolent enemy—reinforced, and encouraged through not being molested—the rebel soldiers flocked around the standards of their regiments.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE CONFEDERATES FALL BACK ON CORINTH.

ONCE more the volunteers from Louisiana are formed in close column, under the blue flag with the Fiery Cross. While awaiting orders, Hubert Glynne forms them in line, and, riding from right to left flank, addresses a few words of encouragement to each company.

A mounted orderly galloped up, bringing the orders of the general commanding this the left wing, which is to advance up the hill and hold the enemy in check. Three other regiments, under the command of a brigadier-general, are ordered to the task of defending the right wing and driving back the enemy.

Again the tramp of the Louisiana Blazers and their wild shouts are heard, as they ascend the hill at the "double," and breast the summit. No sooner have they done so than they find themselves face to face with the enemy at point-blank range.

A cheer from the now confident Yankees is answered by a wild rebel yell, and then the work of death recommences. A crashing volley on either side is succeeded by rapid file firing, and as the sun appears above the eastern hills, the work of carnage is in full swing. Men are dropping fast, and being carried from the ranks to the rear—for as yet Yankee and rebel stand firm, and deliberately load and fire at each other. Soon, however, the gun-barrels get hot, as does the blood of the combatants, and Colonel Hubert Glynne, perceiving the temper of his men, gallops along the line, waving his sword and shouting—

"Give them the bayonet, my brave boys! Close up your ranks and charge! Steady! Follow me and the Fiery Cross! Charge!"

He was on foot now, and seizing the banner from him who held it, bore it forward at a run.

In very loose order, but with desperate impetuosity, the Louisianians rushed yelling at the enemy. The first Yankee regiment with which they crossed bayonets broke and fled precipitately, and then Hubert Glynne found his men confronted by a heavy battalion of Buel's men. Halting to retrieve their order after their first success, a few rapid volleys were poured in on either side. Then once more he led them on to the attack with the bayonet. With the advantage of ground in their favour, the charge of the rebels was irresistible, and the Yankee battalion gave way—not precipitately or in great disorder. Nevertheless, they were driven down the hill, and the fight was again transformed into file and volley firing. Men fell thick and fast, and the only consolation Hubert had as he saw his brave fellows drop around him was, that the enemy liked the game far less than themselves, for the Yankees were steadily retreating.

After another fierce charge, which drove the Federals into the shelter of the wood fringing the river, he called off his men, for they began to be exposed to the fire of heavy artillery. Once more, on the top of the crest which the enemy had attempted to mount, the Fiery Cross waved triumphant. Not long, however, in undisputed possession, for soon can be discerned dense masses of troops advancing up the hill. Seeing himself likely to be attacked by overwhelming odds, Colonel Glynne gave the order to throw up a light entrenchment. This was done by the aid of barrels and *débris* from the encampment, and as the Yankees advanced to point-blank range, they found themselves confronted by a furious fire from a foe protected by a hastily thrown up but efficient entrenchment.

Bravely they advanced, but fell back under the scorching fire they met, and again and again essayed the assault with no better success. While the Louisiana regiment was thus successfully defending the hill on the extreme right of the river line, on the left and centre the enemy was pushing forward heavy masses of troops with obstinate determination. The extreme left, nearest to the river, whence the Yankees derived their reinforcements, was pushed back, in

spite of the great resolution and bravery displayed by the Confederates. For three hours the battle raged fiercely all along the line; the left, right, and centre gallantly holding their ground, but the left slowly retiring before the overwhelming forces of the enemy. General Beauregard watched the fight with feelings of deep regret. He saw that the Yankees had been very heavily reinforced; and though they lavishly kept sending on fresh troops to the attack, he knew that they had not yet commenced to use the reserves. On his part, every regiment, every company, was at that moment under fire and battling fiercely, in order to maintain the long line intact.

And now the insensate folly of the rebel soldiers began to tell. All were weary and overworked; while many of those who had spent the night in plunder dropped, unwounded, on the field from sheer fatigue. It was obvious that no troops could long sustain such furious and sustained assaults, pressed by a comparatively fresh enemy. The extreme right still held its ground, but glancing to the centre, the general saw it was forced back. The left had lost fully a quarter of a mile, and, it seemed, must soon give way entirely. At noon exactly the general reluctantly gave the order to retire. The three regiments defending the right wing were now almost cut off by the enemy, who overlapped their flanks. Seeing this, the general sent a mounted officer to order their retreat, while there was yet time.

When this order was delivered, Hubert Glynne had just led his men to the charge against a Yankee regiment then storming his flank, and having driven them headlong down the hill, turned to the part of the entrenchment against which the enemy were again advancing.

Slowly and sullenly the men of the Fiery Cross retreated, yielding up to the enemy voluntarily the post which they had vainly striven to carry by assault. Meanwhile, though the right and centre were thrown back, to keep in line with the left, the battle still raged fiercely. Again and again the Federal hordes were sent staggering back, leaving their dead and wounded strewn on the field. At one o'clock the scene was one of awful grandeur. Along a line of about three-quarters of a mile, two armies, numbering at least

eighty thousand men, waged desperate battle. The positions of the combatants were marked out by the white rolling lines of musketry smoke, which completely concealed them from each other's view. One continual rattling roar of musketry reverberated along the whole extent of the line, and occasionally rebel yells and Yankee shouts could be distinguished as the troops came to close quarters. At one o'clock, a charge was ordered along the whole lines, which was delivered with desperate valour. The Yankees were pressed back into the wood and up the hill, and finally took shelter over the crest, where they halted to reform, evidently in no hurry to renew the attack. Once more the rebels were masters of the hard-fought field. At this juncture, in view of the terrible exhaustion of his men, General Beauregard deemed it advisable to order a general retreat. The orders fell on the ears of many a brave officer and soldier who, while he prepared to obey, was yet filled with grief and anger. The wounded were gathered up and sent to the rear, and then the weary victors retreated, slowly and sullenly, peering through the battle smoke with fierce and bloodshot eyes, longing to see the beaten foe again advance. The brigade in which was the Fiery Cross regiment was commanded by General Breckenridge.

To him said Beauregard, as he mournfully watched his exhausted soldiers march slowly past—

"General, *this retreat must not be a rout*. You must keep the enemy back if it cost you your last man."

"General, it shall be done," was the brief, soldierly reply.

And how nobly it was done history attests.

Gathering his command around him, numbering in all not more than six thousand men, he posted them at the junction of two roads along which the army was to march back to Corinth. Fatigued, jaded, and fearfully cut up, the little band of heroes cheerfully took up their post, and prepared to do battle against the whole Yankee host.

It was not long ere the enemy came forward, cautiously feeling their way over the hard-fought field, strewn with the dead. Breckenridge instantly got his regiment into line, and, without waiting for the attack, charged the enemy.

Again rings out the fierce rebel yell! Again is the blue

flag emblazoned with the Fiery Cross borne to the front! See the tall form of Hubert Glynne, carrying the standard with one hand, waving his sword with the other, and by voice and example urging his men on.

On, on they go, with fierce, irresistible rush, penetrating right through the enemy's line, striking dismay and terror into many a Yankee breast.

Ha! See! the blue flag has gone down amidst dust, and fire, and smoke! See! again, it is upraised; again it defiantly waves in the battle breeze, and before it and the men who follow, the Yankees scatter like sheep. But, see! it is borne now by another hand! Where is the tall form of Hubert Glynne?

Seek him at the head of his men, where at such a time he is to be found. He is not to be there discovered.

Alas! the brave colonel of the Louisiana Blazers has fallen, pierced by a Yankee bullet, and now lies bleeding on the plain.

Presently the recall is sounded by the bugles, and, in obedience to the order, the troops fall back and commence throwing up a light entrenchment, lest the enemy should again attack in overwhelming numbers. There, weary and hungry, stood this band of heroes, prepared to defend the post at the cost of their lives.

The enemy came no more. Sorely chastised, the Yankees cared not again to advance against that wall of steel and fire.

The two days' battle was over—a glorious, but, alas! almost profitless victory for the outnumbered rebels. In the two days at least twenty-six thousand men fell, and of these fifteen thousand were Federals.

The enemy made no further attack, and the brigade under Breckenridge was employed during the afternoon bringing in the wounded, and despatching them in ambulances after the Confederate army, marching wearily on Corinth, which General Beauregard considered the great strategic point of the campaign.

The sufferings of the unhappy wounded were terrible. They continued to be brought in from the field all the afternoon; but it was a long and agonizing ride they had to endure, over some of the worst roads in the Southern

Confederacy. As they were carried, groaning and bleeding, from the vehicle to the temporary hospital, it was heartrending to see the pain depicted in their pinched and pallid features. Some of them had lain on the field all night.

Vainly was search made for Hubert Glynne. He had been seen to stagger and fall, but in the confusion and excitement of the combat the place could not be found. For two hours Captain George, attended by Jupiter and Darby Kelly, roamed over the field, without finding him. The shades of evening began to close over the bloody scene, and sadly, reluctantly, the Englishman relinquished the search, persuaded that he must have been made a prisoner, and carried off by the enemy.

The Louisiana Blazers went into this their first battle more than eight hundred strong, and came out with a loss of thirty officers and four hundred men. More than half of their whole number had fallen, killed or wounded, and this without reckoning slight hurts, from which very few were free.

Captain George himself had received a rifle bullet wound through the fleshy part of the left arm; but as it did not bleed much, and was certainly not dangerous, he merely bound it up and went on.

To him the uncertainty as to the fate of Hubert Glynne was a great sorrow. They had become great friends. Hubert strongly reminded him of another old and tried companion in arms, whom the readers of the "Black Angel" and "Star of the South" may remember—no other than Gerald Leigh, that brave, gallant, simple-hearted Virginian gentleman.

Captain George was not one to be forgetful of a promise given to a friend, and he now thought on how he could best fulfil the wishes Hubert had expressed to him. To leave the battle ground, go back to New Orleans, after only one action, was repugnant to his feelings, and he knew not how to escape from the difficulty.

But, as it happened, the Yankee bullet brought with it a solution. The wound grew hourly more painful and inflamed. When he arrived at Corinth with his regiment, to which a new colonel had been appointed, vice Hubert

Glynne, reported as missing, he found that there was no probability of further fighting at present. The surgeon, too, informed him that his wound would preclude active duty for at least a month.

Under these circumstances our friend resolved to wend his way to Mobile, where he had heard his old friend, Gerald Leigh, then was. He could not question his informant, brave Captain Jack Pinner, for, alas! he lay, with many another gallant gentleman, stiff in his blood, unburied, on the field of glory.

Of the three who that morning, at early dawn, sipped coffee and smoked together, one lay dead, and as to the other his fate was unknown.

"Ah, well!" said the Englishman, with a bitter sigh, "it may be my turn next. It is the fortune of war."

Before starting for Mobile, Captain George had come to the resolution of joining the brotherhood of the Fiery Cross. He had been commissioned by his missing friend to watch over and guard his sister Maude from harm, and also protect the slave girl, Lola, to whom all owed such a debt of gratitude, from the designs of her enemies.

He thought he could best fulfil this duty by joining the society, which was rapidly extending in influence, authority, and numbers. So our friend the Englishman took the oaths, and was with acclamation admitted as a Knight of the Fiery Cross.

CHAPTER XXXI.

LOLA IN THE HANDS OF HER ENEMIES.

It occurs to the author of these pages that it is high time we bethought ourselves of some important characters in our story, whom we left in the "Crescent City"—New Orleans.

They say, "after a storm there comes a calm." Now, in this case the proverb does not hold good, for the scenes we shall describe as enacted in Louisiana will be as stirring as those of the "battle chapters," the difference being merely that the actors are fewer.

This, however, may have the happy effect of concentrating and intensifying the interest.

We will then take leave of Captain George on the road to Mobile, with a bullet wound in his left arm, as also of Hubert Glynne, who, we may as well inform the reader, is not killed, but a prisoner in the hands of the Yankees, wounded, and very miserable, of course, but still alive.

Back, then, on the wings of imagination from the plains and forests of Tennessee to the low ground—beneath the level of the river—in and around New Orleans.

When last we saw the handsome slave girl, Dolores Velasco—or Lola as she is generally called—it was at the Governor's ball. There, attired in amber satin, trimmed with lace, she was distinguished as the lady in "black and gold"—her great beauty winning for her the suffrages of a majority present in a contest to decide who was the fairest flower.

At the instance of a strange gentleman, who made her the offer, she stepped into a small close carriage, thinking, of course, to be driven direct to the house of Maude Glynne, who had been reported to her as seriously ill.

For a minute or two she did not notice where she was being driven, nor did she observe that the moment she entered the carriage a man, wrapped in a cloak, with hat slouched over his eyes, stepped from behind a pillar, where he had been standing half concealed, and held up his hand as a signal. No sooner had he done so than a negro boy ran up, leading a horse, on which this man mounted, and rode along in a leisurely manner after the carriage.

Had she known that it was her foe, Varley Fang, who thus watched and followed her, and had she noticed that she was being driven in a direction the reverse of that in which lay the house of Maude Glynne, she would have called to the driver to stop, and have screamed for help had he failed to do so.

But she knew nothing of these things, and was driven on—unresisting, unsuspecting—to her fate.

Lola had not been driven off more than ten minutes, when Maude Glynne re-appeared in the rooms and sought for her. She was informed that her beautiful friend had gone home, but, to her surprise, on reaching there, found

her not. Nor did she return all that night, to the great alarm of her loving—one time—mistress.

Alas, poor Lola! you are in the hands of the enemy. The beautiful bird has been caught in the ruthless fowler's net!

Suddenly the carriage pulled up short in a dark and lonely street. Just as she looked out of the window, and was wondering where she was, the door was thrown open, and she saw the figure of a man, whom the next instant she recognized as Jabez Hack.

A cry involuntarily broke from her, and in that moment the dreadful thought flashed across her mind that she was in the power of her enemies.

She had only the opportunity of giving vent to one little scream of terror, as she was rudely seized, a hand thrust on her mouth, and forced roughly back into the carriage.

"Now then, Hyæna, give us the gag—quick! It won't do for our pretty bird to give us a song just yet."

At the mention of the dreaded name "Hyæna," her heart sank within her, and she knew she was a helpless victim in the hands of her enemies. She knew that the plot she had overheard was now being carried out. She knew that she was to be delivered, bound, a helpless victim, into the hands of the master villain, Varley Fang. What her fate would be, should fortune not favour her, or should no friend discover her abduction, she too well knew. She knew it, and with panting heart, mentally resolved to destroy herself, before she would suffer dishonour; or, failing that, to take a terrible vengeance on the plausible villain who had lulled her suspicions to sleep the better to carry out his infamous designs.

These thoughts passed through her mind with great rapidity. She was powerless to resist, for the other carriage door was thrown open, and Hyæna Jones, handing a piece of wood with whipcord attached to Jabez, seized her arms, while the latter proceeded to gag her.

Perhaps the gentle reader does not know how this operation is performed. The author, having witnessed it, is in a position to give every information. A piece of wood is forced between the teeth and tied tightly with string round the back of the head. A common ruler is a good example

of the sort of piece required. When this is firmly bound in the mouth, it effectually prevents articulate speech. But should it be required to prevent any sound being heard, over the wood and around the ends, cloths, or handkerchiefs, are bound, so that nothing but a very low muffled groan can the unfortunate victim give vent to—unfortunate, indeed; as the pain and the state of semi-suffocation are horrible.

In this plight poor Lola quickly found herself, and knowing that, at present, resistance was utterly futile, submitted quietly, despairingly, to her fate. Her elbows were bound behind her back, and then, after a close examination to make sure she was safe, Hyæna Jones entered the carriage and seated himself by her side. Jabez Hack, mounting the box, drove rapidly off. Once or twice she saw, with faint hope, soldiers on duty, or citizens returning home. She hoped that they might stop the carriage and discover her condition, but in this she was doomed to disappointment.

In less than half an hour from the moment she first entered the accursed vehicle, she was beyond the city, out in the open road which ran by the side of the Level.

After driving at a rapid rate for some two or three miles, the carriage was brought to a standstill, and Jabez dismounting from the box, the two scoundrels held conversation together.

"Well, Hyæna, reckon we've done the job neat and tidy."

"Aye, and earned our dollars easy."

"Yes, an' not dollars on'y, but a dam fine gal into the bargain."

"But we're agoin' to take her up to your boss, ain't we?"

"Sartin sure, but there's no hurry. We can pitch him a tale about bein' follered an' havin' to dodge, an' all sorts o' things. I tell you what I'm up to, Hyæna, and no flies about it. I mean to keep this hyar white niggas gal to my own use for a day, anyhow."

The Hyæna's eyes gleamed in a peculiar manner, and an expression came on his face which should have warned Jabez Hack.

"What are you goin' to do wi' her?" asked Jonea. "Reckerlect, there's two of us, an' I've got suthin' to say."

His white teeth and small, savage eyes presented a picture which made the girl tremble, as just then she caught a glimpse of his face.

"O Heaven, protect me!" she cried, mentally. "Was ever poor maiden in the hands of such remorseless ruffians?"

"You got something to say?" replied Jabez Hack, mildly. "Well, say it then, quick, and be d—d to you!"

"Well, it's jest this, Mr. Hack. I've got as much right to this hyar gal as you, an' without my will nothing shall be done."

"How can you help it?" asked the other, savagely, "you cussed nigger, you!"

"Easily," was the quiet reply of the Hyæna; "I can give an alarm; or, if it come to that, I've got a knife and a pistol as well as you, Mr. Overseer."

"Oh, yer have, have yer? an' yer mean to say you'd use your knife to me?"

"Use it to you? I'd slip it into yer ugly carcase up to the hilt, as soon as I would into a pumpkin!"

Jabez Hack was aghast at the cool defiance of the slave.

"Cuss me!" he muttered, "I wish to blazes I'd gone into this business with Sam Long, young Pinner's overseer. What a cussed unlucky thing for him to get sent to quod!"

However, he saw that the Hyæna was in earnest, and, though the mulatto had never before shown his teeth to him, he knew enough of his character to be perfectly certain he meant "business" on this occasion. Now Jabez, though a ruffian, was not a coward, and determined in his own mind that, come what would, the girl should be his property. At the same time he by no means liked the thought of a personal encounter with the lithe and crafty slave, and resolved to avoid it if possible.

On his part, the Hyæna had come to the very same determination, only, perhaps, of the two, he was the more ready for a fight. His passions were inflamed, and he

resolved fiercely that, come what might, Lola should fall to him. Sweet was the thought of holding that beautiful form in his arms, and having her absolutely at his mercy.

Sweet—perhaps sweeter—was the thought of the glorious revenge he could reap while gratifying his passions. He remembered how she had scorned him—had declared she loathed him, and would prefer the unclean animal from which he took his name.

Fierce desire filled his breast, and not boundless wealth would have tempted him to relinquish his object.

Behold, then, the situation!

The girl Lola, helpless, bound, and gagged, in the power of two men, each of whom have fully determined she shall be his—each of whom has slights and affronts put on him by her to avenge. Then beyond these looms the form of Varley Fang, who has hired them to bring her, and consign her to his power. Hopeless, indeed, is her case! and so the poor girl feels it to be, as she lies back in the coach half fainting with pain and terror.

"O Heaven, protect me! Hubert Glynne, where are you? Rescue your poor slave girl, Lola—she who loves you with her whole soul and heart—from these evil men!"

Alas! he to whom her thoughts flew involuntarily lay at that moment a wounded prisoner in the hands of the Yankees.

Sad fate, indeed! to hear herself quarrelled and wrangled over; to hear these scoundrels both assert they meant to keep her for their own base purposes, so long as they chose, ere surrendering her to their employer, the arch villain, Varley Fang.

Despair settled on her soul as she listened to the progress of the conversation.

They are going to gamble for her!

"What shall it be—*entière*, I s'pose?" said Jabez Hack, who was a skilful player at that American gambling game.

As it happened, however, the cunning Hyæna suspected this, and at once refused.

"No *entière* for me, Mister Hack. I ain't good at the game."

"Whst the blazes will yer have, then?"

"I reckon we'll just cut the cards till one on us lifts the ace o' spades—him as does it first to have the gal."

"Oh, curse yer! just as yer choose," replied Jabez, savagely. "We'd better hurry on, it's gettin' daylight."

"Where are we goin' to take the gal?"

"Thar's a hut whar the niggers choppin' firing wood for the steamers used ter hang out. It's empty now, and will suit our purpose."

Once more the vehicle rolled on. Lola now knew too well her fate. She was to be taken to this deserted hut, and there gambled for. No hope of safety or rescue appeared. There was, however, yet a chance—a little one, truly—that her captors might relax enough in their vigilance to enable her to use the little revolver Captain George had given her, and which she still wore concealed in a little sheath she had purposely made in her stays, and so disposed as not to be easily discoverable. Its presence gave her some little inconvenience at times, amounting to pain, but for this the greater feeling of safety and self-confidence amply compensated. Gagged as she was, she not only found it impossible to speak, but to hear well, as the handkerchief and cords tightly encircled her head. She noticed, however, that Hyæna Jones became suddenly on the alert, and bent his head to the carriage-window in an attitude of listening. Evidently he was alarmed, for he at once shouted to Jabez Hack, and the carriage came quickly to a stop. The grey light of morning was just stealing over the scene, but the mists of the low swampy ground and river rendered the obscurity nearly as great as before. Lola listened, and, bound as she was, thought she could discern a distant sound. Her two captors had no doubt on the subject, for Jabez Hack exclaimed, with an oath—

"It's horsemen—a cavalry patrol, I expect. We'd better drive into the swamp till they've passed."

"It may be some o' Miss Maude's friends as have got on the trail."

"Anyway, we'd better get out o' the road, and be pretty s'pry about it."

And then the vehicle was turned, and Lola knew by the rough jolting and the occasional sinking of either wheel that they had left the road.

In the space of two minutes they again came to a halt, and now she could clearly hear the approaching sound of horses' hoofs rattling along the road at a hard gallop.

Then her heart beat with hope. Perhaps they had come to rescue her, and would discover where the carriage had left the road.

Alas! it was extremely unlikely. The road was very rough, and consisted of a mixture of half-dry mud and sand. A damp mist, too, hung about the low ground, so that the chances against a party of horsemen riding swiftly along discovering and taking notice of the place where a small carriage had turned from the road was improbable in the extreme.

Onward came the galloping horsemen, whom Lola, in the excitement of renewed hope, hailed as her deliverers. Evidently there was a considerable body.

"That ain't a patrol," grunted Jabez Hack, who was well acquainted with all the military arrangements of the district; "thar's too many of 'em, and they don't ride steady enough."

"Look to the gal. I'll go and see."

Thereupon Hyana Jones darted away, and Lola saw him disappear in the swamp-bush in the direction of the road.

The place where they now were was perfectly concealed from view, as the scrub and bush were quite rank and plentiful. So, unless they had been seen, and the horsemen were indeed in pursuit of them, and watching for wheel-tracks, it was almost impossible the retreat could be discovered.

Clatter—clatter—clatter!

The dull thunder of the horses' hoofs on the half-hardened road fell like heavenly music on the ears of the captive girl.

Nearer!—nearer!—they are close; so close, she fancies, that they must see the carriage. She could not see, and did not know, how close and perfect was the concealment given by the scrub.

Onwards the horsemen swept, and she could even hear the sounds of their voices.

Surely they would stop. Fate could never be so cruel as to allow them to go by, without discovering her!

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE NIGHT WATCH IN THE BUSH.

JUST when the thunder of the hoof-falls seemed quite close, by a desperate effort, Lola raised her body, leaned towards the window, and with her whole power screamed. But the sound emitted by this desperate effort was a very feeble one—hoarse, half smothered by the gag and handkerchief bound round her face.

Savagely the Hyæna seized her by the throat, and dashed her head back against the woodwork of the carriage. For a moment or two she lay half stunned, and when she recovered, the sound of the clattering hoofs of the horses had almost faded away.

"All right, Jabez," said the Hyæna, with a hideous grin. "I dunno what their game is. Anyhow, we're right enough, and they've gone straight up the road to Kemer's plantation. We can turn down a bit farther on, and keep close to the Levée. That'll bring us right on to the wood hut."

"Was it a patrol?" asked Hack.

"Don't think it could ha' bin. They wasn't all in uniform, and I made out one among 'em as I knew. He had his left arm in a sling, and passed close to me."

"Who was that, then?"

"A cussed Englishman; a friend of Hubert Glynne. Captain George they call him."

"Ah! I mind seein' him once. But I thought he'd gone to Tennessee wi' the rest o' them, arter that bit o' blue rag they're so proud on; the flag, you know, wi' the Fiery Cross 'broidered on it."

"Where are they goin'? What's thar game?" asked Hyæna Jones, eagerly.

"Wall, as to whar they're a-goin', the road they've tuk will bring 'em right on to my boss's place. Mebbe they're gone to pay a visit to Mr. Varley Fang."

"What! arter the gal? D'ye think they've got wind o' it?"

"Lord on'y knows. Anyhow, it's all right as it is. Ef

they do go there, they'll find nothin', and be altogether on a wrong scent. Seems to me what we've done's bin the best thing that could ha' happened."

"Ef they're arter the gal, they won't give up the hunt in a hurry. Seems to me we'd better lay by till evening."

"Is there any rations in the buggy?"

"Yes, and a half-gallon of Bourbon. I thought there might be need for it."

"Bully for you, Hyæna. Then we'll jist move this old rattletrap a little further in the bush, an' make ourselves comfortable for the day."

"What about the gal?" asked the Hyæna.

"Oh! we'll take her bandages off for a minute or two, an' let her take a bite an' a sup."

"S'pose she hollers, an' any one comin' along hears the screech?"

"Wall, I suppose one on us 'll be watchin' over her. Ef she do try it on, I know what I shall do. I'll find a way o' quietin' her, an' I should think you didn't want a lesson, Hyæna."

The gleaming eyes and cruel grin of the mulatto attested sufficiently that he comprehended. It was well understood that if the girl should cry out, a knife-stab in the throat should stop her outcry. Hyæna Jones pulled out a long-bladed, short-handled dagger, and, feeling the point, smiled grimly, and chuckled his wild-beastlike laugh. He felt so incensed against the girl for the scorn with which she had treated him, that hatred at times almost overpowered any other evil instinct.

The vehicle was moved farther into the bush, and a still more secure and concealed spot chosen.

After both the ruffians had refreshed themselves with food and drink, poor Lola was ruthlessly dragged out from the carriage, and Jabez Hack addressed her—

"Look hyar, my gal; it don't suit us that you should go off the hooks, as there's dollars a-hangin' to this business which your dead body won't fetch. We've got to keep you alive, so I'm a-goin' to take that gag out o' yer mouth. Hyæna, get yer hog-sticker ready, an' if she makes a squawk, slip it into her up to the hilt."

Out came the knife, and the expression of the Hyæna's

yellow face caused poor Lola to shudder. Then Jabez commenced unfastening the gag, which he accomplished not without some trouble, so tightly was it fastened on. Deep red weals marked where the cruel cord had cut into the delicate flesh of her neck and cheek; and when her mouth was again free, the overseer saw that blood trickled from between her pale lips.

"Sarve yer right for tryin' to screech," was the brutal way in which he took notice of it. "Hyar's a rag; wipe yer mouth and eat. Hyar's a leg o' chicken and some cake. an' you can ha' some Bourbon, if you choose."

Lola was seated on a log, and before replying looked around her. The carriage was nearly in the centre of an open space in the dense scrub which the marshy ground gave birth to. Seated on a log, her feet sank in the wet quaggy ground, while the wheels of her travelling prison also were buried half up to the axletree. She knew that the place where they then were was somewhere in the swamps which abound along the Mississippi; but where, she could not say.

Then, after a brief review of her helpless position, she said—

"I can neither eat nor drink, nor do anything, while my arms are thus tightly bound behind me."

"That's right, gal: I'll unloose ye. But look out! None o' ycr games! Hyæna, keep a sharp eye, and knife her like a porker if she tries it on."

The long, keen blade he held glistened ominously before her eyes, and she trembled, not so much at the cruel-looking steel, but at the more cruel-looking countenance of the monster who threatened her.

Jabez Hack proceeded to unloose her arms, which had been tightly pinioned behind her, and once more the unhappy girl is free.

Free from her bonds; but no more.

The Hyæna stood close by her, and she thought—perhaps not without reason—that he would be glad of an excuse to plunge his knife into her breast.

At present, resistance she knew was useless, so she partook of a little food, and for want of water was forced to take a few mouthfuls of the fiery Bourbon whisky.

Not that there was no water to be had, but it was denied her.

She asked Jabez Hack for a drink.

Hyæna Jones sharply said—

“Drink some, and be d——d to you, you slut! or go without. You shan’t have any water.”

Jabez Hack quietly acquiesced, as though caring neither one way nor the other; and the unhappy captive, though parched with thirst, was denied even this privilege, which, one would think, a human being would not deny any other living thing.

Complaints were useless, so Lola—brave heart!—said nothing; hoping, with desperate earnestness, that an opportunity would turn up for her to use the deadly little revolver concealed in her girdle, the gift of the Englishman, Captain George.

At present there was no chance whatever. Although they knew not that she was possessed of a weapon, the Hyæna watched her with cat-like intentness.

“I can eat no more,” she said, presently, “since you are cruel and unmanly enough to deny me water.”

She then said, after taking a few mouthfuls—

“May I lie down in the carriage? You see I am quite helpless.”

Submission was obviously her only policy under the circumstances. Nevertheless, the Hyæna was suspicious.

“Let’s give the gal a sup o’ water,” said Jabez Hack, in whose ruffian breast there arose a spark of pity, as he noticed her dry, parched lips and fevered eyes.

“Give it her yourself. I ain’t goin’ to wait on the saucy slut,” was the snarling reply.

Jabez gave her a drink of water, and then her most inveterate enemy said—

“We’d better tie her up again; she’s all a tiger-cat!”

“Better be careful. She mout go off the hooks, and then we’d lose the dollars for her,” replied Jabez. “Let ner lie in the carriage. I’ll watch over her while you have a sleep.”

“I don’t want to sleep,” said the Hyæna, sharply and suspiciously.

“Very well, then; keep awake,” said his fellow villain.

"I'm goin' to have a pipe. I never want sleep, I don't, when I've got business on."

Lola crawled into the carriage and lay on the floor, her head reclining on the seat. She could not sleep, much as exhausted nature required that healing balm. Hyæna Jones, knife in hand, prowled up and down opposite the open door of the carriage, never going farther than a few paces in any direction.

Jabez Hack sat on a fallen tree, smoking, and sipping now and then at a tin pannikin containing the fierce Bourbon whisky. But it was observable he did not drink hard; nor did he allow himself to doze off for even a second, though in reality very drowsy. Hyæna Jones, pacing up and down with a cat-like tread, cast on him now and then a furtive glance.

The fact was, each feared the other, and dared not give way to sleep, or relax their vigilance for a moment. Jabez, though he had all the arrogant contempt of the "mean white" for the mulatto, yet liked not the look of his partner's gleaming knife; while the Hyæna, on his part, had no intention of giving him the shadow of a chance.

It was a strange sight to see two men, banded together in iniquity, watching their victim, and yet keeping sharp guard against each other.

The crafty, cruel, bloodthirsty slave of Hubert Glynne would gladly have taken the opportunity to stab his partner, and obtain undisputed possession of the girl. By that means he would rid himself of a rival, an obstacle, and at the same time secure the whole of the promised reward, on delivering the girl to Varley Fang.

On the other hand, Jabez Hack felt all his prejudices and ruffianly instincts aroused by the mulatto's determined opposition to his designs. Still, though he, too, would gladly have freed himself from his enemy by murder, he judged it expedient to bide his time. He would win, he thought, when they gambled for her with cards. Besides, there was something so threatening and dangerous-looking in the appearance and demeanour of Jones, that, spite of himself, he hardly dared precipitate a conflict.

Thus things remained; each watching the exhausted girl, their victim, and each other. The sun rose in the

heavens, mounting to the zenith, and slowly sunk again to the west—these two men still glaring like tigers over their helpless prey.

For a while we must leave them, and devote a chapter to the band of horsemen who, galloping swiftly along the road, had so alarmed Jabez and Hyæna Jones, and caused them to seek shelter in the bush till night should again cast a mantle over them and hide their misdeeds.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CAPTAIN GEORGE DENOUNCES VARLEY FANG TO THE SECRET SOCIETY.

WE left our friend, Captain George, about quitting the scene of action, immediately after the desperate and bloody battle of Shiloh. As the Hyæna has recognized him among the band of horsemen, it will be as well to notice briefly his movements up to the present time.

First, he made his way back by rail to Mobile, where he remained a few days, on account of the pain of his wounded arm, and to obtain a little needful rest. There he met his old friend, Gerald Leigh. We need not say that the meeting was a cordial one on either side. Gerald, burning with martial ardour, insisted on a long and particular account of the battle of Shiloh—that glorious though fruitless victory for the rebels; then, when Captain George expressed his determination of going on to New Orleans, Gerald decided to accompany him, and in less than a fortnight from the day the Englishman received his wound both were in the Crescent City.

Gerald Leigh was paler and more sad than of yore, though his eye beamed frankly and fearlessly as ever; but his sunny smile was now seldom seen, the old jovial laugh never heard. He felt the death of his brother, the brave and unfortunate Darey, deeply—and even the victories achieved by his country's arms could not atone to him for that bereavement. Still, notwithstanding his quiet, subdued grief, his whole heart was in the war. Ere he saw Captain

George, he had heard of the fame of the new association—that of the Knights of the Fiery Cross, which was spreading far and wide over the country. Gerald at once enrolled himself as a member, and when he and the Englishman met, they were able to greet each other after the fashion of the initiated.

It has before been said that Captain George had resolved to join the brotherhood. He had now a duty to perform—to watch over and guard the interests of his missing friend, Hubert Glynne, and his sister. This, he was of opinion, he could best do by joining the secret society, and therefore he lost no time in being duly qualified and admitted.

Arrived in New Orleans, Captain George at once communicated to the military authorities a portion of that which had been related by Hubert's friend, Jack Pinner (now dead on the field of battle), the night before he was killed.

Backed by Gerald Leigh, he obtained permission to see this overseer, who had been cast into gaol for peculation on his master's estate. It will be remembered that Jack Pinner had overheard a conversation between this man and Jabez Hack, who was in the employ of Varley Fang. So earnestly did he urge the importance of what this fellow knew on General Lovell, who was then in command at New Orleans, that it was arranged that he should offer the fellow a commutation of punishment, if not a pardon, on condition of his revealing anything he knew of a plot to deliver the city into the hands of the Yankees. It was night when Gerald Leigh and Captain George were ushered into the prisoner's cell. He was, however, probably frightened at the enormity of the treason contemplated, and considering that a confession of being privy to such a plot would only insure more severe punishment, he for a long time denied all knowledge of the affair. Gerald unfortunately let fall that his master had been killed on the second of the two days' fighting at Shiloh, and this made him the more obstinate. Ultimately, however, sufficient was elicited from him to justify them, Captain George thought, in taking steps to unmask and counteract the villany of which he felt certain Fang was guilty, and accordingly, at the instigation of Gerald himself, and some other members of

the Fiery Cross, a special conclave was called to consider the matter.

About a hundred and fifty members were present, and the matter in hand was quickly disposed of.

In the absence of the Grand Master, who was a brigadier-general, and away with his regiment, one of the Knights Commanders occupied the post of president; this was Lieutenant-Colonel Knollys, of Mississippi, an old and well-tried veteran, who had won honour in the Mexican war.

Captain George, as the one best posted up in the subject, addressed the meeting. "Most noble President and brother Knights of the Fiery Cross, I have a statement to lay before you, of vital importance to the Confederacy and this association. I have sufficient reason to suspect one of our members—I mean one who reluctantly allowed himself to be enrolled—of treason. ("Name! Name!") I will name him. Varley Fang."

A murmur here ran round, and the President remarked—

"A Yankee by birth, and I fear a Yankee in spirit."

Then Captain George went on, and briefly related what had been told him by Jack Pinner, who lay dead at Shiloh. Also what little he had elicited from that gentleman's oguish overseer, and the conclusions to which he had come on the subject. All listened quietly to what he had to say, and when he had finished, the President said—

"Sir, I have heard, in common with all here present, that you have said. There seems a case of great suspicion; but the question arises, what action can be taken until more definite proof can be arrived at?"

"Most noble President, I have a proposal to make. I have reason to believe that this said Varley Fang has, somehow or other, treasonable documents, either here in his abode at New Orleans, or at his plantation house. I would propose that a sufficient body of the members of this honourable society be told off to question this Varley Fang, and, if necessary, to search his house. Armed with the warrant of the council, he will scarcely dare resist."

This proposition met with general favour. The President, however, was a cautious man, and spoke as follows:—

"Gentlemen, most honourable Knights of the Fiery Cross, I would suggest that, before taking any decisive step, strong endeavours be made to procure certain evidence of the guilt of the accused—of his complicity with plots against the state. Then, when taken red-handed and with no loop-hole for escape, I say let justice be done, and would willingly sign the mandate dooming the traitor to death."

"Hear! hear!" sounded on all hands, and then Captain George again rose.

"I have another matter which I wish to bring before the attention of the assembly. Failing our getting proof of the treason of this man Fang towards the state, I wish to know—being myself but a neophyte in this most honourable order—whether a dishonourable action, a crime perpetrated by one member of the Fiery Cross against another, is an offence of which the tribunals can take cognizance?"

"That is an important question," said the President, gravely. "I will look over the rules and articles to which all have subscribed, before replying."

While the President was thus employed, the gentlemen present entered into conversation among themselves. The place where the meeting was held was a long room at the back of an hotel in Jackson Square, and communicated with the main part of the house only by a light bridge. It was used for meetings of volunteers, rifle clubs, and other purposes, and was admirably adapted, therefore, by the privacy which this arrangement procured, for those who hired it.

Many among those present were acquainted with Varley Fang; and, though none knew anything positively against him, it was evident, by the tone of the general conversation, that he had been disliked and was now suspected.

The assembly had been hastily convened, and those composing it were in every variety of costume. The larger proportion were in uniform, of course; but there was a considerable number attired in clothes of fine material and fashionable make. They even were mostly in military service of some kind, but were on furlough, or had not yet joined their regiments. The frequency of this sort of thing was a dangerous fault. The hot-blooded Southern gentlemen fought with furious, dauntless bravery in the

field, but when there was no battle or sharp campaign imminent, too many of them shirked the tedium and restraint of military life. Men who would have gone into action gladly every day, until shot down, when ordered as part of the garrison of a fort—a position which there was little likelihood of the enemy attacking—grumbled, complained, and even avoided the irksome duty until actually compelled to undertake it.

Under these circumstances, as the fort or position must be guarded, men had to be withdrawn from the field—thus weakening the effective force of the campaigning army.

But of this, and of many other things which militated against success, these reckless dare-devils thought not.

They were Southern gentlemen, and, as such, would fight cheerfully, die gloriously. But hard, irksome work—that was another thing altogether.

Let it not be supposed this feeling was universal among the Confederate soldiers. It was, unfortunately for the cause of Southern independence, wide-spread enough to do deep and lasting harm.

But to return to the question at issue.

When the President arose, after a careful perusal of the books and documents, the noise of conversation ceased, and all respectfully seated themselves.

“I find, gentlemen and brother Knights of the Fiery Cross,” he said, “that there is no doubt about the case put before me. Our laws have strictly provided for it. I will read you Nos. 17 and 18 of the bye-laws:—

“‘17. Neither the Grand Master, nor any of the Knights Commanders, nor Knights of this honourable Order shall, either individually or in conclave assembled, take any notice or cognizance of any private quarrel between members; such private quarrels, when they unfortunately arise, to be left at all times to be decided by the usual code among gentlemen, military or otherwise.

“‘18. Nevertheless, if any Knight or Knight Commander of this Order shall be guilty of any flagrant act of dishonour, he may be punished by expulsion or otherwise. Furthermore, any Knight or member who shall conspire to treacherously injure another in person, property, honour or otherwise, may be dealt with as a duly qualified conclave

presided over by a Knight Commander, may ordain. The culprit may be sentenced to death, and his executioner appointed, bearing in mind Rule 1 of the bye-laws, which enacts that no Knight or member shall be sentenced to death unless at least thirty members shall be present.'

"The reading of these laws is explicit, gentlemen. I now ask if the noble knight who propounded the question can put it in a more definite shape?"

"I can," replied our friend, promptly rising. "I have good reason to know that this man, Varley Fang, has conspired and is determined to carry off by force an exceedingly handsome slave girl, the property of my friend, now Colonel Hubert Glynne. If he shall succeed in this design, I wish to know whether I, as the friend of Hubert Glynne, and commissioned by him to protect the girl, who is a great favourite of his sister, can invoke the aid of the members of this society, of which I have the honour to be a member, in order to rescue her, or whether that task would devolve on myself alone?"

"I can answer you at once, sir. In such a case, according to the laws of the society, to which we have all sworn allegiance, a mandate would issue immediately on a conclave being called. This conclave need not consist of more than ten and a Knight Commander. It would order the renegade instantly to make restitution to those named in the said mandate, who would return the girl to her master. But, be it observed, the death penalty would not be awarded in case of refusal, unless thirty are present at the meeting."

The President sat down, and shortly afterwards the proceedings terminated.

The next day, Captain George, Gerald Leigh, and some half-dozen other officers proceeded down the river to Port Jackson, beneath which, at a safe distance, lay the Yankee fleet. Rumours were rife of spies and plots; and from something that had come to his ears, the Englishman thought that news might be gathered of the underhand doings of Varley Fang.

Thoroughly convinced that the man was a scoundrelly schemer, he was most anxious for evidence, and therefore deferred calling on Maude Glynne even, thinking he

could serve her more effectually by defeating and exposing the designs of this man. Now, it happened that when the group of officers, of whom our friend was one, arrived at the fort, there was a great deal of sickness prevalent among the troops, especially amongst those unaccustomed to the river banks. Many officers were laid up. Under these circumstances, when the commandant asked Gerald Leigh and his friends to volunteer for a week, until others should be sent, they could not well refuse.

Early one morning, on going out to commence work on a light gun battery, on the land side, with a detachment of men, Gerald Leigh made prisoner of a negro strutting about. That he was there for no good purpose, was thought sufficiently proved by his endeavouring to escape. Anyhow, he was sent to head-quarters as a spy, and on the road thither, under guard, was met by Captain George.

This latter, who was full of the thoughts of Varley Fang's intended treachery (it would have been well had the Southern officers themselves been as strongly impressed on the subject), at once commenced questioning him. The fellow was trembling with terror, and when our friend found that he knew Varley Fang by name, he at once concluded that this was one of his tools. When searched, some papers in cypher were found on him; but, as might naturally be supposed, the key thereto was wanting. Captain George leaped to a conclusion at once. The document was a long one, occupying several sheets of paper. This doubtless contained that which would reveal the whole plot; but how was it to be read?

Vainly the most skilful cryptographists tried their hands; it was undecipherable. The key must be had, in order to read it.

And where was that key?

The fellow knew Varley Fang, and though nothing of importance could be elicited from him, it was almost certain that this nigger was one of his agents.

Varley Fang had the key of the cypher! That was one conclusion arrived at by our friend.

The other was a natural sequence thereto: it must be obtained from him.

All that day was occupied in carefully and minutely copying the document. The officer commanding would not part with the original; but when Captain George explained to him that he believed he could furnish the key, he allowed him to copy it; also every other facility.

Late that night he, with Gerald Leigh and a few more, started back for New Orleans. Riding at their best speed and not sparing their horses, they could not possibly reach the city under twenty-four hours.

It happened that this was the very night of the Governor's ball, where Dolora Velasco appeared and was unanimously chosen as Queen of Beauty. But our friends had other business than dancing and feasting, and immediately set about procuring fresh horses, intending to ride on to Varley Fang's plantation house, and there take him by surprise, surrounding the place, and so preventing the possibility of his escaping, or causing the papers they sought to be made away with.

The confidence of Captain George seemed to have infected all the others. Every one now confidently relied on discovering at Fang's house the key to the mysterious cypher. The reader has seen them career along the road at full gallop, greatly to the alarm of Hyæna Jones and Jabez Hack, who forthwith sought shelter and concealment in the swamp.

Little did Captain George dream that the unhappy slave girl he had promised to protect every way in his power lay within a few yards of him, bound, gagged, and in the power of two as great villains as ever walked God's earth.

Onward they swept, guided by some of the party who knew the road, and soon came to the boundary of Varley Fang's plantation. Skirting this for about a mile, a broad straight plank road led them right up to the house—a strongly-built, solid structure; not a light, airy mansion, such as those of most of the planters.

A light was seen as they approached, and then they halted their horses, and consulted for a few moments. All arrangements having been made, the house was silently surrounded—two of the party remaining with the horses, whilst all the others advanced on foot.

Gerald Leigh knocked at the large door in front. It seemed as though Mr. Fang expected some one, for in a few seconds he himself threw the door open; first saying, however—

"Is that you, Jabez?"

To which Gerald Leigh had presence of mind enough to reply "Yes," in a low tone.

When Varley Fang found himself confronted by three armed men, he started back in the utmost astonishment, mingled with alarm, until he observed that Gerald Leigh wore the uniform of a cavalry officer.

"Your pleasure, gentlemen?" he asked, with tolerable politeness.

"With you and your house. We have come to search it."

An oath escaped him, but instantly he corrected himself, and reasoned thus—

"Ah! these are friends of Maude Glynne. It is suspected that I have caused the girl to be carried off, and they have ridden in hot haste to rescue her. I wondered what delayed Jabez and the mulatto coming with her to claim their dollars, and have cursed their tardiness a good bit. It's very fortunate. Perhaps, too, they'll swear they were pursued, and have kept back purposely. It's confoundedly lucky the girl hasn't arrived—she's a deal of bother. As it is, I can let them scorch and be d——d. Really gentlemen," he said, assuming an air of virtuous indignation, "I protest against this; it is a great outrage, and I see not why I should be submitted to it."

"We have authority for all we do," said Gerald Leigh, curtly, who had quite fallen in with the views of his friend the Englishman, and thoroughly believed that Fang was guilty of what was suspected.

"Very well, sir; if you have authority, well and good. I perceive you are in Confederate uniform, and, before you commence searching my house, I must request your name and the names of those who accompany you."

At first there were only two with Gerald Leigh, but Varley's countenance fell when the others, numbering twenty, flocked in, and almost filled the lower room. Not that he had anything to fear from twenty more than two, but, conscious of guilt, this evidence of numerical force, gathered

so rapidly against him, overwhelmed him. He thought to himself: "Supposing the girl had been here, and I thus unprepared, I should have lost her; and, besides, must have got into trouble."

When his eye rested on Captain George he gave quite a start of astonishment, and his dismay was increased. Intuitively he knew that the Englishman saw through him, and was his enemy. However, he put a good face on the matter, and bade his unwelcome visitors do as they chose—search his house through and through—reserving to himself the right of appealing to the proper authorities for reparation for this gross outrage.

He was greatly astonished and indignant at the minuteness of the search they made. He fully believed that they had come in pursuit of the girl Lola, and when the keys of a piece of furniture he used as a desk were demanded from him, he asked, sneeringly—

"Pray, gentlemen, for what are you searching—a rat or a mouse? Whom do you think can be concealed in that cabinet? There is not room for a child."

"We are searching for papers, Mr. Varley Fang, and mean to find them."

"Papers!" he cried, thrown off his guard; "you are not then looking for——?"

He stopped himself, and Captain George asked, quickly—"Not searching for what?"

"Nothing, sir; nothing: it does not matter," he replied, remembering himself in time.

The search was prosecuted with great diligence and care, but not one scrap of paper which bore on the subject could be found. It was noticed by some that when it became broad daylight, which was very shortly after their arrival, the owner of the house frequently glanced out anxiously, as though expecting some one. In good truth, he was in great dread lest, while his unwelcome guests were in the house, Jabez Hack and Hyæna Jones should arrive with the girl.

He was quite at a loss to know why they had not appeared long before this. He himself had watched them drive away with Lola, when, all unsuspecting, she had entered the treacherous carriage. He had followed at a respectul

distance till he felt sure all was right. Then he rode swiftly home by a near cut bridle-path, expecting that she would be brought some hour or so only after himself. Just about the time when he thought them due, he heard the knocking of Gerald Leigh at the door, and found, instead of a beautiful girl in *his* power, that he was in the hands of a body of armed men.

The search was a fruitless one. If he had any papers of a treasonable nature in the house, they were too well concealed, and after several hours spent in the vain task, it was relinquished.

"Well, gentlemen, having turned my house upside down, I hope you are now satisfied," said Fang, triumphantly.

Having exhausted every effort in vain, there was nothing for it but to retire, which the searchers did, baffled and somewhat crestfallen.

Captain George alone was still as confident as ever. He declared his conviction that though Varley Fang had been crafty enough to provide against danger by not keeping any criminating papers about, yet that he was assuredly guilty, as time would prove. His belief in the duplicity of this man Fang was as firm as the religious faith of a Moslem. From the very first he had taken a strange dislike to the man, and had suspiciously observed his every look and action.

As the party rode away, Varley Fang watched them with feelings of triumph. Fortune favoured him. Had the girl been there, they would perhaps have found her, notwithstanding the secure hiding-place he had provided—a place which had been used for no better purposes many a time before. This was a narrow, strongly-built room on the first floor, having only one entrance, which was by a rude flight of steps from the lower part of the house.

This room, or rather long closet, was situate between two other rooms, neither of which were often used. From its narrowness, and the fact of there being no entrance on the floor where it was situated, few would suspect its existence.

It was long past noon when the party who had conducted the search rode away from the plantation. All were hungry and thirsty, but of course would not partake of

refreshment at the house of the suspected Fang. One of the party, however, volunteered to lead the way to the house of a hospitable sugar planter some few miles away, and, as the sun was broiling hot, and New Orleans some fifteen miles away, the offer was accepted.

It was evening when the party left this place, and when they again struck into the New Orleans road the shades of night were closing in on the scene.

The horse of one of the party cast a shoe, and as there was known to be a negro blacksmith on the plantation contiguous to that of Varley Fang, this gentleman struck across the country, which he well knew, towards it. The others promised to walk their horses slowly on for some distance, to give him an opportunity of catching them up by riding hard after having his horse shod.

When he again joined them, in the course of half an hour or so, he casually mentioned that he had seen coming along a by-road a close carriage drawn by one horse, and driven by Jabez Hack, overseer of Varley Fang. At first the driver of this vehicle seemed desirous to avoid him, and even drove off the road a little way, as if about to seek shelter and concealment in the scrub; but he rode too fast, and, as he passed the vehicle at a gallop, thought he heard a strange muffled cry or groan, as though some sick or wounded person was inside.

At the time little or no attention was paid to this, but viewed by the light of after-acquired knowledge, it was highly important.

About an hour after dark the whole party arrived in New Orleans, where they separated; a great number glad to seek rest and sleep at their homes or hotels.

Captain George, however, felt restless, and by no means inclined for repose. He remembered his promise to Hubert Glyane respecting his sister, and resolved to call upon Miss Maude at once.

To his astonishment he found the whole household in the utmost confusion, and the young lady herself in deep grief.

Then he learned, for the first time, of the mysterious disappearance of Lola. Instantly his suspicions fixed on Varley Fang.

He it was who had abducted her—and, full of this idea, he set about prosecuting inquiries. Maude Glynne could be of little service to him. Weeping and sobbing, she told all she knew.

"A gentleman with whom I had been dancing at the ball took me into the conservatory, and detained me there for some little time in conversation. I wanted to go away, but could not without being rude. When I returned to the ball-room and inquired for Lola, I was told that she had gone home. On my arrival home I found she was not there; nor has she yet returned."

"Was she seen to go away with any one?"

"She was seen to enter a carriage: it was supposed to go home."

"Did any one enter with her?"

"No one."

"Where was the carriage? and who placed it at her disposal?"

"I really cannot say," replied Maude, helplessly; "I have asked, but cannot ascertain."

"Who was the gentleman with whom you danced, and who kept you in the conservatory?"

"I really don't know. He was introduced to me; but I forget his name."

"Did you see him with any lady in the course of the night?"

"Oh, yes, I saw him with several. I don't think he is a Southerner, for he was not in uniform."

"Did you see him talking with Mr. Varley Fang?"

"Now I think of it, I did," she said.

"Ah! now I see my way. I feel certain it is as I suspected."

"What do you suspect?"

"Why, that Varley Fang has caused this girl to be abducted. It was by his wish that your partner led you away, and kept you away until the girl had been induced to enter the carriage, by some means or another."

"Do you really think so?" she cried, in dismay.

"I feel certain of it, and will make diligent inquiry. If I can find out where she is, and who has abducted her, I will recover her—at the sword's point, if needful."

"Ah!" cried Maude Glynne, piteously; "if she has fallen into the hands of bad men—I tremble when I think of her fate. She has the fatal gift of beauty, and it is for that she has been abducted."

"Miss Glynne," said Captain George, sternly, "she shall be recovered at all hazards. If I am *too late*—if she has been subjected to ill-treatment or outrage—then, I swear to you, on the honour of an Englishman, she shall be avenged."

His words and manner were sufficient to convince her that he meant what he said, and, spite of her fears and forebodings of evil, she took some comfort to her heart.

Alas! at that moment unhappy Lola was in the power of the two ruffians who were gambling in the deserted hut for possession of her.

Bound fast, weak and exhausted, utterly helpless, she knew that there was no hope of rescue, and awaited her fate with a feeling of revengeful fury in her breast.

She could not be saved—at least, she would be avenged! And giving way to her rage she ground her teeth, and, though powerless then, swore solemnly to take the life of both these ruffians.

What would she not have dared and suffered in defence of her honour?

Life itself she would have lost; but, alas! she could not die.

Remorseless and relentless, they took cruel care that she should neither injure them nor herself.

She was destined for a fate to her far worse, and, knowing it, felt tempted, like Job of old, to "curse God, and die!"

CHAPTER XXXIV

TWO WILD BEASTS—THE HYÆNA AND THE BEAR.

BEHOLD the unhappy Lola, as she now lies in abject misery and despair. Half lying, half crouching, in the vehicle, her amber silk robe torn and disarranged, her handsome arms lacerated by the cruel cords—hair dishevelled and

shoulders bare, for at the time when she was entrapped into the carriage she wore, as the reader will remember, a low-necked dress—that dress from which they named her “the lady in black and gold,” and as such hailed her as Queen of Beauty. Many other marks and bruises than those apparent she bears about her person, from the brutal usage to which she has been subjected.

What a picture, and in so strange a framing! This beautiful girl, lying thus, in all her finery in which she flew lightly over the ball-room floor, gazed on and admired by all, soiled, and pierced with many a rent; her eyes, once so lustrous, now dim and bloodshot; her lips, to be permitted to kiss which many a gallant gentleman would have risked his life, lacerated by the cruel gag; her soft satin-like skin scored by the ropes, and scratched in many places. Picture her thus lying, the noontide sun blazing full down on the open space in the swamp-brake, scorching and burning, as though bent on drying up all the water of the swamp. Then, to this picture add the figure of a sullen, ferocious man, heavily bearded, and with a brutal expression of countenance, seated on a log at a little distance, chewing, spitting, and drinking by turns, but never losing sight of her; or of the third in the group, the treacherous, crafty, and devilishly cruel Hyana Jones. This latter prowled up and down before the door of the carriage, taking short, quick steps, and with a restless manner, strongly suggestive of the beast from which he took his name passing behind his cage bars. The looks he ever and anon darted on the unhappy captive had a mingled expression of hatred, triumph, and gloating joy. Now and again he muttered between his teeth such disjointed sentences as these:—

“Ah, ha! my blonde beauty! now I have won; your pride is laid low, your spirit humble, and your body—ah! yes, that will soon be in my sole possession too. I shall hold you in my arms—you, who compared me to a beast.”

Then, occasionally, his eye would meet that of his companion in iniquity, and the expression would suddenly change to one of fierce determination, and words in a lower tone, to this effect, would proceed from his lips:—

“Mine, Jabez Hack, mine! and, sure as death, you shall

meet death if you thwart me. All depends on our game of cards for the gal. If I win I shall have her all right; if I lose I shall have her none the less, but a cussed white man called Jabez Hack won't walk about any longer on this earth."

Jabez, despite the undoubted courage he possessed, divined, by a subtle sense for which we have no name, that something hostile to him was passing through the other's mind. He divined this, and though it would be going too far to say he trembled, he did not half like it. Spite of himself, he dreaded the Hyæna, so quiet but stealthy, and, as he knew well, relentless and determined. However, he made up his mind for a fight, if it came to the worst, and relied on his vigilance and superior strength to bring him off victor.

They resembled nothing so much as two beasts of prey growling over a sweet gazelle, their expected prey, each afraid to commence for fear of the other.

Wearily the hours of the long day passed to the imprisoned girl. The sun was scorching hot, the air sultry—her throat was parched, her lips hurt by the cruel gag. She lay in a state of semi-insensibility in a corner of the carriage, her head resting on the seat.

Ever and anon, and on her slightest movement, the sallow face of Hyæna Jones would appear at the carriage-door, and she would close her eyes shudderingly at the cruel gleam she saw in his; or the coarse, bearded and sullen features of Jabez Hack would be protruded over her, and she would hear him demand, in his surly, growling voice, whether she meant to be quiet.

A faint "Yes" would be her sole response, and then she would turn away from the hateful vision, and pray for help.

For help!—from whom could she expect it, situated as she was in the solitude of the swamp?

Heaven!—and Hubert Glynne!

All through that long day she hoped, and tried to believe, that her late master would come to her rescue.

Alas! he was far away in Tennessee, and could render her no aid.

The "wish was father to the thought;" and though she

knew he was many miles away on a distant battle-field, the fancy would return that he would rescue her.

The sun rose to the zenith, and still those men, pitiless and determined, kept watch on her and on each other. Either would gladly have rid himself of his companion, but that did not mend her sad case; on the contrary, it made it, if possible, more hopeless. Neither dared sleep, and so she had two pairs of vigilant eyes constantly watching her.

She fancied that she might possibly, with great pain, have wrenched one of her arms free from the rope. But it would have been folly to attempt it. Stiff and numbed by the compression, she could scarcely have used it, and, besides, her slightest motion was so quickly observed, that the attempt could only have ended in her being more tightly bound.

The dreadful day passed on—the sun sank slowly to the west. The relief from the sultry heat was something, and after a draught of water, into which the Hyæna had maliciously poured some rum (for he knew that she loathed it), the unhappy captive felt somewhat more refreshed, and, strange to say, she felt a renewal of strength.

Evening came, and then her watchers, the surly bear and cruel hyæna, seemed to bestir themselves, and made preparations for leaving. The rum-and-water which she was compelled to drink, well knowing that to ask a favour of her persecutors was utterly futile, revived her still more, and she so far recovered from the half-fainting state in which she was, as to request that they would at least loosen the cords which bound her.

“All right,” growled the Bear, “we’ll be on the move now, and night’s coming on, so you may as well loosen her a bit. Pity to cut through her flesh right to the bone—spile her beauty, bless her!”

Brutal as were his words, she joyed to hear him give consent, for hope again rose in her breast.

“Ah! if I can but free one arm, and possess myself of the revolver they know not I have concealed—then, I may yet be saved. Ah! Heaven grant that my aim may be true, or that, the bullets failing, the bayonet dagger may reach the heart!”

Hyæna Jones made a snarling reply to the suggestion of

the other, but after some little delay, as though loth to spare her any pain, he entered the carriage, and, rudely dragging her up to the seat, commenced loosening some of the cords. In doing so he was by no means gentle, and asked, with a hideous grin, just as he gave a particularly hard wrench to an end he could not unfasten—

"Hurt, eh? my beauty! Ah! your ladyship's fine skin ain't used to it. D——n the rope!" he savagely cried, jerking it so as to give great pain. The knot did not yield, nor did the girl cry out. She winced a little, it is true, but hated the inflictor so that she vengefully repressed all expressions of pain.

Next, he took a knife and savagely cut at the cord. In doing so he plunged the point into the flesh of her shoulder. A slight shudder was all the token she gave. But when he had partially freed her—urged by devilish passion, in the very wantonness of triumph—he tore the low dress completely from one shoulder, leaving bare half her bust.

Then she screamed aloud—a scream of rage, loathing, and wounded modesty. As his audacious hand approached she struggled to her feet, and with the one arm free pushed him violently back.

Scream after scream rang from her, and she nerved herself for a desperate effort to escape.

It was, however, utterly hopeless. Jabez Hack came running up, and between them they forced her back—panting, half-fainting, with the blood streaming from the wound the knife had made in her shoulder.

"Hold yer cussed row, yer slut!" said Hyæna Jones, as he thrust his hand on her mouth.

"Why, may I be — if you ain't been a sticking yer knife in the gal!" cried Jabez Hack.

"An accident."

"No wonder she squauked out."

"'Twasn't that as made her screech," replied the Hyæna, with a devilish chuckle.

"What on airth wur it, then?"

"Oh, it don't matter — mebbe love for my pretty race!"

"Wall, don't be arter any o' yer capers wi' her—she ain't yours yet," growled the Bear, "and never will be."

"All right! it's getting dusk—we'll hitch the horse to, and strike into the road agin."

Securely fastened as before, poor Lola, smarting and trembling with loathing and shame at the indignity put upon her—scarcely feeling the bodily wound—shortly finds the carriage again in motion. This time, however, it is Jabez Hack who is seated by her side.

"You know the way, Mr. Hyæna," he said, "and I'm just going to see as yer ain't up to any more o' yer pranks."

The Hyæna laughed a devilish laugh as he mounted the box, and drove back through the brush.

"What a modest gal it is—he! he! he!—reckon she'll have a chance o' that being took out o' her 'fore long!"

CHAPTER XXXV.

LOLA FALLS TO THE LOT OF JABEZ HACK.

A LONELY hut, some quarter of a mile or so from the yellow Mississippi, above the level of which it is situated only a few feet—a rough edifice, without either window or chimney—a scarecrow-looking habitation, dismal and solitary, hedged in on all sides but one by the dense swamp jungle. Towards the river, a path or beaten track led down hill, and ended in a small jetty or pier, alongside which the steamers used on occasions to come for wood.

The hut had been for months deserted by the old negro who had inhabited it. The blockade of the Mississippi by the enemy had nearly destroyed the steamboat traffic on the grand old stream, and now the roaring and snorting of the high-pressure boats was never heard at this landing-stage.

There were yet, however, the remains of several wood piles close to the little jetty, and the track from the hut to the river, though grown over and almost obliterated by

the rank vegetation, could yet be distinguished by the absence of the taller scrub, and the greater hardness of the ground.

The Levée, or raised embankment, ran along the river side, and any one passing along the road on this might fail to notice the narrow overgrown path leading to the hut. This latter stood on a piece of ground a little higher than that surrounding it, and the track had been rendered hard by laying down rude planks and logs. Out of sight and hearing of the few who went occasionally up and down the Levée road, the hut was dismal, solitary, gloomy. The narrow path down to the river was not straight, so that even the Levée and the water were hidden by the brushwood; and it seemed as though the wretched fabric were planted down in the midst of a small space from which the taller scrub had been removed, but that there was no path whatever. Inside, the aspect was no less forlorn and miserable. The floor was of damp earth; the slabs forming the walls slimy and mildewed; and the state of the hearth showed that it was long ere a fire had burned there. A log half consumed, a heap of ashes, damp, like everything else in the place, a bent and broken tin pot, and a few bones lying about, told a tale of desolation.

In this deserted abode of the old negro woodcutter, behold the captive Lola, dragged in by those whom I have chosen to designate as the beasts of prey—Bear and Hyæna—Jabez Hack, and the mulatto slave, Hyæna Jones.

There is a table in the hut—if table it can be called—a couple of rude planks fixed on legs firmly imbedded in the earth; also two stools, fixed in the same way; it seemed as though the late occupant never expected to entertain more than one guest at a time, and took good precautions lest he should steal the furniture.

The men had come provided with tapers, which was so far fortunate; as, though the night was a cloudless one, and a young moon was shining, the interior of the hut was very dark.

A taper was stuck on either end of the rude table, and then the two men proceeded to business. Lola listened with trembling horror to their dialogue.

“Let’s understand, fair and square, Mister Hack,” said

the Hyæna, "as to this bizness. If I win the gal, I'm to do as I d——d please with her?"

"That's so."

"You'll clear right out, and leave her to me here?"

"We've got to hand her over to the boss, mind, to get the dollars."

"That's all right. There's no hurry for a day or two for the matter o' that. 'Taint we're without food, nor drink neither. There's enough rolled up in that horse-blanket to last a couple o' days or more," he said, pointing to a largish roll which he had thrown to one corner of the hut.

Jabez Hack's eyes gleamed, and he looked more sullen than ever at this evidence of his companion's forethought. It seemed as though the Hyæna had made up his mind as a foregone conclusion that he was to dwell in the swamp for a day or two in the company of the charming captive.

Jabez Hack had not so provided, and felt deeply incensed at the superior intelligence of the mulatto.

"Ah! you thought yerself cock-sure o' winning, I s'pose. Anyhow, it's all the same. If I win the gal, you can leave me the grub and make tracks; that is to say, arter you've lent me a hand to tidy this place up a bit, and make it respectable for a gentleman and his lady on their wedding tour."

A hideous grin accompanied this pleasantry, for Jabez Hack wished his companion to think that he was quite easy in his mind as to the result, and could even be merry about it.

It was far from the fact, however.

He grew momentarily more and more uneasy.

The quiet, snake-like manner of his accomplice impressed him far more than would any amount of bullying or bravado. He was just beginning to understand what sort of a man he had to deal with—a man cruel, relentless, treacherous—from whose heart all merciful thoughts and impulses had long since been crushed out—a man who, in this case, had an object in view, and meant to attain it.

It was only now Jabez Hack began to realize the true state of affairs.

He saw now why it was that Hyæna Jones watched so

constantly and persistently in New Orleans—why it was that he had deprived himself of rest and sleep in order to spy on every action of the intended victim. He it was who had given information that she was going to the ball, though it was true the master villain, Varley Fang, was also aware of it.

Hack now understood the earnestness, even enthusiasm, with which this mulatto entered into the affair.

Jabez, with stupid cunning, chuckled over the thought of outwitting his master, and forestalling him with the handsome ex-slave girl, on whom he had set his heart. He was for a long time blind to the fact that Hyæna Jones was playing exactly the same game with himself.

The mulatto, ever restless, paced up and down, ever and anon letting his glance fall on the unhappy girl, who lay crouched up in a corner of the hut.

She was very quiet and submissive now—and why? For two reasons.

She knew that resistance at present was all but hopeless. The second reason was that, as she was now bound, she thought she could in time free her right arm from the cords.

If she should succeed unobserved, she could reach the revolver hidden beneath her dress at her girdle.

She was infinitely stronger and better now. Her body seemed to have received fresh strength, and the flame of hope for the first time for many hours burned brightly in her breast. She longed, with beating heart, for the opportunity—eager for the fight which should give her liberty, if it ended in her favour.

Though a woman, and naturally tender-hearted, no spark of pity or compunction at the thought of slaying these two men had place in her breast. Their treatment of her and their infamous intentions had divested them, in her eyes, of all semblance of humanity, and she looked on them as two horrid ghouls—enemies to God and man.

Meanwhile she listened, and slowly and very quietly tried to loosen the cords which bound her right arm.

“And now then, my bully boy, for the game,” said Hyæna Jones, grinning and chuckling—“the game which shall make that bundle o’ yellow satin, wi’ a pretty gal underneath, all my own.”

"Don't be so fast, my cuckoo, you ain't won her yet, an' I don't mean yer to. If I can't whip you at every game o' cards out, I'll eat my hat."

"Dessay you can," replied the Hyæna, quietly; "but I ain't a-goin' to play none o' yer flash games. No *entiers* for me, thank you."

"How do you mean to settle it, then?"

"I'll show you," replied the mulatto, quietly, as he produced a pack of cards, and placed them on the table. "It's quite simple, and I'm sure to win."

This quiet self-possession, and sneering, snake-like smile, made Hack furious; but he restrained his passion. To have precipitated a fight would have been bad policy. The Hyæna's sharp eye watched his every movement; and in the slave's belt he could see the haft of a knife quite ready for instant use. The mulatto was lithe and active as a wild cat, and Jabez knew that were he to draw a revolver, before it could be aimed the other's knife would be up to the hilt in his body.

"Look here!" continued the Hyæna; "you see the cards are on the table. Very well. You cut a card and I'll cut a card, and so on till one of us cuts a Jack; whichever does first, wins the gal."

"I'm agreeable," growled Jabez, and then the men prepared to gamble for possession of the girl. Each went about it with deliberation, sharply watching the other.

"No finging, mind," said Jones; "a fair, clean lift."

"All right," replied the other; "I'll go first, if you like."

This was an advantage; but his opponent granted it him, and Jabez prepared to cut.

"Wait a bit; let's clearly understand, so that there may be no back tracks or nonsense. If I win, you'll take your traps, clear out, and drive away with the trap?"

"That's right."

"And come back to-morrow night to take the gal on with me to Varley Fang, so as to draw the dollars?"

"Right you air. I don't know what the boss'll say to a bale o' damaged goods being brought home."

"D—n the boss! Are you ready?" cried the mulatto, who was getting excited

His eyes gleamed dreadfully ; and Lola, as she glanced up and caught their wolfish glare, shuddered. He absolutely trembled with excitement as Jabez advanced to the table on which lay the pack of cards.

"All ready !"

For a moment the two men paused. They were facing each other on opposite sides of the table. Between them lay the pack which was to decide the fate of Lola, who watched from the corner where she lay, with straining eyes, this scene, in which, though no actor, she was so deeply concerned.

Who would win ?—Jabez or the Hyæna ? And what would be the result ?

A question she asked herself with beating heart ; and, profiting by the pre-occupation of the men, she made fresh and desperate efforts to free her right hand. The wrist was all bruised and the skin lacerated ; but, spite of the pain, she persevered. Alas ! it was in vain ; for though she felt sure that the cord was slowly relaxing, from her quiet but persistent efforts, it was yet impossible to draw her hand through.

"Ready !" once more said Hyæna Jones, and then Jabez Hack put out his hand and lifted some cards.

It was his left hand he used, and when he had cut he exposed the face of the card to *himself* first. The next instant he started back ; a yell of triumph broke from him, and turning the face towards Hyæna, he showed a Jack !

He had cut one the first time. Quick as thought, and almost at the same instant that he exposed the card, he drew his revolver and levelled it at the head of his opponent.

"I've won !" he said ; "I've won ! I know yer, Mister Hyæna, and don't mean to risk anything. Own yourself licked !"

Hyæna Jones turned of an ashen hue. He panted and trembled with rage and excitement. He had not expected that Jabez would take such prompt measures, and standing at his mercy, with a pistol levelled straight at him, he ground his teeth and inwardly cursed his folly.

For the present he was powerless.

"All right, Mr. Hack," he said, in a voice which he tried

in vain to make unconcerned and firm; "put up yer pistol. I've lost, I confess. Curse my luck!"

"Put up my pistol? Ha! ha! ha! A likely thing! Not if I know it, Mister Hyæna Jones—leastwise, till you clear your yellow carcase out o' this. Tell yer, I know yer!" he shouted, more vehemently. "I know yer more this last few hours than ever I did before. Yer meant doing as yer liked wi' the gal whether you won or lost, and if I hadn't been too quick for you I'd have had a knife atween my ribs afore now. Tell you it's no use tryin' on yer tricks. I've got yer measure exactly, and I'd as soon shoot yer as I would a dog. So out yer go—out at the door, and straight down the track. Sure as death, I'll shoot yer where yer stand if yer don't move, and sharpish too."

The Hyæna's white teeth gleamed as he bared them with a wild-beast expression on his face, as though he yearned to spring upon his present conqueror and tear him to pieces.

"You've won this time, Mr. Hack," he hissed between his teeth. "It'll be my turn some day."

"Won't yer go?"

The Hyæna slowly retreated to the door, and passed out Crack!

A bullet whistled past, and actually grazed the skin of his arm.

He turned, knife in hand, and made as if to spring on Jabez, who stood firm, the revolver still steadily levelled.

Hyæna Jones paused—to advance was certain death.

The table was between them, and Hack would certainly put at least two bullets into him ere they could come to close quarters.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the conqueror, triumphantly. "Did yer hear my little nas buzz past yer ears, Mister Jones? Don't be frightened, I was only having a bit of fun; jest hurrying yer up a bit, I may say."

"Curse such fun, an' you too!" snarled the Hyæna, placing his right hand on the other arm, which had been slightly grazed by the bullet.

"Wall, clar out now—that's all I've got to say, or I'll shoot in arnest next time. Away yer go, straight down the road."

The mulatto was forced to comply, for Jabez never

lowered his pistol, and could at any moment have shot him. The night without was bright and clear, so that the triumphant possessor of the hut and its contents could watch his defeated enemy steal silently away.

"Ha! ha!" he laughed, triumphantly. "Now, my pretty bird—now, my plantation beauty, I've got you all to myself. First, however, as in politeness bound, I'll bar the door." The door in question had never been on hinges, and consisted only of a few thick planks, nailed together by cross pieces. It fitted with a groove or channel at the threshold, and was slid along when opened or shut. There was an iron bar, with which, having closed the doorway, he fastened it.

It was far from a secure protection, however. The rough planks were warped and twisted, and in two places there were holes as big as a man's hand; these Jabez Hack stopped with some rags he found about, and chuckling at his forethought and cunning, turned his attention to the girl, his unhappy, and now all but despairing, prisoner.

For the last half-hour she had been vainly trying to free her right hand, suffering grievous pain by her persistent efforts. Although she had greatly loosened it, she could not quite complete the task. Her hand and wrist swelled in fact so as to render it a task of greater difficulty. Each minute as she worked her hand about she knew that the cords were slackened, but then the flesh swelled more and more, and grew more painful. As Jabez Hack advanced towards her she raised herself up and made one desperate final effort.

Could she but have succeeded, escape seemed possible; for she had now but one enemy to deal with, and he had carelessly laid his pistol on the table.

His eyes gleamed with an unholy fire, his coarse face flushed with triumphant expectation, and the girl read in his manner and whole appearance that there was no mercy to be expected.

"Come, come, my gal, it's no use your kicking and struggling. I've got you tight enough, and the best thing you can do is to be good-natured and good-tempered. Give us a kiss and say you'll be good, and I'll loose them cords."

She was on her knees, panting with anger and glaring on

him in a way which, if looks could kill, would certainly have done so to him.

"Well, will you behave yourself or not?" he asked, sharply.

"Loose my hands," she murmured, hoarsely.

"Loose your hands, eh?" Well, I don't know as you can do much harm. Will you promise to be quiet, and not offer to get away?"

"Yes, yes, anything," she cried, in her desperate anxiety to be free from the bonds which prevented her from using Captain George's pistol.

"Ah, that's right! Well, give me a kiss, to bind the bargain."

As he spoke he held down his head towards her—a horrid leer on his repulsive features.

"Give us a kiss, my gal, a right down lovin' kiss; none o' yer lip touches that on'y serve to tickle a man; but one as shows you mean *business*."

She felt his breath, redolent with rum and tobacco, on her face; saw his eyes fixed on her with a hideous stare, worthy of a satyr; and her loathing overcame her prudence. She started to her feet, and using her whole strength, hurled him back with her manacled hands, a scream of rage escaping her.

"Wretch!—ruffian!—beast!—how dare you?" she cried.

He had not thought there was so much strength remaining in her. He staggered back, and but for the table would have fallen. Recovering himself, he saw her standing before him gloriously defiant, despite her soiled and torn dress, all but stripped from her shoulders by the brutality of himself and accomplice; splendidly handsome, despite the ill usage, fatigue, and anguish she had suffered; her cheeks flaming—eyes sparkling—with anger and indignation.

"Back, you scoundrel!" she said, taking advantage of the effect her sudden energy and fearless promptitude had obviously produced on him.

But, alas! the effect was but transient! With a furious oath he prepared to renew the attack.

"Beware!" she cried threateningly. "If you molest me you shall repent it. I fear you not; I am armed"

"Armed?—ha! ha!—an' if you was armed a dozen times, my fine gal, yer could do nothin' with yer hands tied. Come, now, you'd jest best be reasonable. You're alone wi' me in this hut; there's none as can help you. I've won you fair, and by G—d I'll have my own! So jest make up your mind, an' be quick about it."

"Liar!—thief!—scoundrel!" she screamed, gazing wildly around, in the vain hope of discovering a means of escape. And that it was indeed vain she quickly saw, with feelings akin to utter despair. *He*, her enemy, was between her and the door, which, in addition, was barred and barricaded. Still, however, her spirit kept her up, and she resolved to defy and battle with him to the last.

"Aha! you laugh at me, yer nigger slut, do yer?" he cried, savagely; "so much the worse for you!"

Then he rushed on her, and notwithstanding she struck at him fiercely with her bound hands, he caught her in his strong arms, his face gleaming with rage and triumph.

As she felt his hateful breath on her cheek, scream after scream rang from her lips. Desperately she struggled, with almost supernatural strength, to escape from his strong grasp; so desperate, indeed, that he with difficulty held her.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE RETURN OF THE HYÆNA.

"Cuss her!" cried Jabez Hack, "she's as strong as a she-panther. It's no use, my gal: you're mine, an' you'd better give up without further kicking. Aha! you're tiring, are you?" he cried, as he noticed that her strength was failing, and that she gasped for breath.

"Mercy—mercy! help—help! villain! wretch!"

"Ha, ha! it's all over, is it? Our little fight's done, eh, my fine yaller gal!"

"Mercy—mercy! O God of Heaven! I am fainting! —Ah!"

At that moment, when strength, health, life, seemed

about to fail the unfortunate Lola together, a hand was protruded through a rent in the door—a hand holding a pistol—which was slowly and carefully levelled at Jabez Hack. His face was the other way, so he knew nothing of his danger. A sharp crack—a flash—and a wreath of smoke. Jabez was shot in the back; and uttering a cry, half groan, he staggered and fell, dragging Lola with him. She quickly freed herself from him, and, as she rose to her feet, felt, with joy unbounded, that in the struggle the cords around her wrists had become still further loosened. She could free her hand she felt certain, and was just on the point of doing so, when something occurred which caused her to hesitate.

Jabez Hack lay groaning on the ground, writhing from pain, and half unconscious from the shock given by the bullet as it plunged into his back. It was while she stood panting and gazing around in wonderment as to where this unexpected friendly shot could have come from, that an arm was protruded through the door, and the iron bar removed.

The next moment Hyæna Jones entered, with the still smoking pistol in his hand. First he looked on his fallen accomplice, shot by his own traitor self; and then, satisfied that he was incapable of mischief, turned his attention to the girl.

"So, Miss Lola, it seems that, notwithstanding my cursed bad luck at cards, I am to win after all. Come, now; jest say, ain't I a better-looking fellow than that ugly scum—eh, my fine gal? Ha, ha! he, he!" and he laughed his peculiar hyæna laugh. "Who'd ha' thought it?"

Lola resolved to dissemble. It was her only chance. She was all but exhausted, and felt quite incapable of renewing the struggle.

She felt that her only hope was that fortune might befriend her, since it appeared that Providence had delivered her over to her enemies, and refused to hear her prayers. So she said, in a feeble voice, "Oh, spare me! Spare me, now! I feel as though I should faint. My head swims. I can scarcely support myself."

"Wall, rest a bit, and see you're up to none o' yer tricks."

Then he turned towards the prostrate Jabez Hack, who lay on his side, breathing heavily, and occasionally groaning. "Ha, ha! my fine feller! thought you were going to get over this amiable nigger, eh? Cusses on yer ugly carcass! I reckon my bullet's settled yer."

So muttering, he administered a kick to the wounded man, his face beaming with ferocity and gratified revenge. Jabez Hack, giving vent to a sound, half cry, half groan, struggled to rise; but he only succeeded in getting on his hands and knees. Seeing this, the Hyæna placed his pistol on the table, and drawing his long knife, stood over his prostrate antagonist—an expression of fiendish malignity and cruelty on his face. He bent over him, and raised the dreadful knife, to plunge it into the almost insensible body of the slave-driver. At that moment Lola gave vent to a slight cry of horror, which she could not suppress at seeing so deliberate a murder about to be perpetrated, even though it was on the person of her deadly enemy. This caused the Hyæna to change his mind. He put the knife back in its sheath, muttering—

"Not afore her; it's best not to let the jade know too much. This feller's a white man, and me they call a slave. 'Tain't worth while throwing a chance away. I'll fix him presently!"

A fiendish grin was on his face as he turned away from Jabez to the girl. He had made up his mind to some course of action, it was evident, by the decided manner in which he spoke. "Now, you gal, do you mean to behave yourself, and do as you're told, or not?"

"Alas!" Lola replied, faintly, "I am helpless, weak, exhausted, utterly in your power! Oh, if you have one spark of manhood in you, be merciful!"

"Ha, ha! my pretty yaller bird! I've tamed your fiery spirit, have I—brought you down from your perch with all your pretty feathers ruffled? Wall, now, since you seem inclined to be quiet, I'll be pretty reasonable with you. When you've rested yourself come along wi' me, and make no more muss about it."

"Whither do you wish me to go?"

"That don't matter. There's this fellow lying here like a stuck porker. He's too heavy to carry far; an' I guess

if I chuck him outside he'll raise a tarnation row, howling and screeching, the cussed cur! I don't want him to be a witness to our love-making; eh, my pretty Lola?"

His eyes gleamed with a wild, triumphant fire, and swept over her form, partly denuded of covering, with a bold and licentious stare. She shuddered, and loathed and feared him more now than she did when he looked his fiercest.

Still she clung desperately to hope; she thought she could free her hands by a great effort. To make that effort at present, would have been to destroy her last chance; so she waited in fear and trembling, striving to nerve herself by prayer for the final struggle.

"Now I don't want to be rougher nor I can help wi' you," the mulatto said, "but, by thunder, I'll make all safe!" So saying, he took some of the rope by which she had been bound before, and advanced towards her. She shrank back, and her heart almost ceased to beat. A cry of dismay escaped her. He was about to bind her more securely.

"Come, come; no nonsense. I'm just going to fix a halter on yer, so that there may be no chance of your making a bolt. We're agoin' a little way down the road, my pet; and as it ain't convenient for me to lose you just at present, I'm going to take the necessary precautions."

There was a devilish pleasantry, a sort of triumphant good humour in his words which made her blood boil, accompanied as they were by the act of placing the noose of the rope around her neck.

At first she scarce knew the meaning of this proceeding; she thought that he meant to strangle her. Death, in her present state of mind had, little terror for her; so she asked, calmly—

"What are you about to do? Hang me?"

"Hang you, my little beauty? by no manner o' means, and for many reasons. First place, you're too pretty; second, you're too vallible. I've got to get a heap o' dollars out of you, my chicken, and I reckon as the boss would scarcely pay for your inanimate carkiss. Ha! ha! ha! he! he! he!" Again that fiendish, wild-beast laugh, which always made her shudder.

"Now, my little beauty, come along."

He held the cord, the noose of which was around her neck, with one hand, opened the door with the other, and motioned her to precede him. Silently she obeyed, feeling that the time for the final effort had not come. Hope burned with brighter flame in her breast now that she found he was not going to tie her hands more securely, as she at one time feared. He halted on the threshold of the door, and gazing on the unhappy wretch, Jabez Hack, still groaning and writhing on the ground, he said aloud, in cruel tones of mockery—

"Strikes me, my bully boy, as you're a shamming Abra'm a bit. I know I hit yer, an' pretty hard too; but you kick up too much row to be a dead 'un. I'll come back by an' by, never fear, and 'tend to ye, my chicken!"

His tone and manner, as he thus gloated over the wounded man, were hideously repulsive. There was a hidden meaning, too, in his last words, which, wrapped up as she was in her own miseries, Lola scarce tried to decipher.

Then Hyæna Jones carefully closed the door, and fastened it on the outside by means of a hasp, which was there for the purpose.

The tapers were still burning in the hut as he moved away, driving Lola before him, haltered like a mule. As he walked down the road he occasionally looked back, as it to see that Jabez Hack was still quiet. Apparently he was satisfied on this point, for he presently struck from the rude track, towards where the horse and carriage had been left.

Meanwhile, Jabez Hack lay quietly enough within the hut for some time. He listened, and all was silent. Then, with evident pain, he raised himself, and crawling to the door, peered through the cracks. The night was sufficiently bright to assure him that his treacherous accomplice was out of sight.

"I'd best get out of this," he muttered. "I didn't like the looks o' that feller when he went away wi' the girl. He may come back and murder me outright."

He then struggled to his feet, not without wincing, and groaning with pain. His right arm hung useless by his side, and his back and loins were saturated with blood, for he had been shot through the right shoulder-blade, the bullet having lodged against the bone.

"A thousand curses on him, the spawn of hell! If ever I get the chance I'll tear his black soul from his yaller body, the d—d nigger, I will!"

He was weak, and suffering from the collapse invariably consequent on gunshot wounds. But though he felt sorely tempted to lie still, every movement giving him intense pain, fear urged him to make his escape from the hut, which might else be his tomb.

Staggering to the door, he tried to push it open—to his horror he found it was fastened on the outside.

A terrible oath broke from his lips. He was earthed up like a fox in a hole, and this fact made him all the more certain that his enemy was coming back.

With what remaining strength he had he hurled himself against the door without avail, for the wooden hasp on the outside was stout and strong. He waited some minutes, in a vain endeavour to force it open, and then was compelled, by weakness and pain, to seat himself on the bench, and lean his head on the table. Blood poured from the bullet-hole in his shoulder, and the wounded ruffian groaned with pain and anguish of mind.

For, in addition to his physical agony, he was in mortal terror, fearing each instant that the bloodthirsty, relentless Hyæna would return and glut his whetted appetite for cruelty by murdering him.

Jabez Hack felt assured in his own mind that the mulatto would return, and drops of perspiration stood on his forehead as he thought of the small chance he, weak and desperately wounded, would have with the lithe and vigorous Jones.

Nerved by the desperation of fear, he resolved on another attempt to escape. Right well he knew that it was to be done at once, for he was losing blood fast, and momentarily his strength was failing him. Desperately he clung to life, now that he was in the very jaws of death. He did not ask himself whither he should fly if he did succeed in getting away from this place, or what he should do. He stayed not to consider that he would probably perish in the swamp from his wound ere he could reach a place where he might get help.

The immediate terror of the revengeful, and, as he now

knew, relentless and determined Hyæna, occupied his whole mind. Each moment his fancy conjured up that dreaded form—he pictured him advancing, with long, keen knife, to plunge it into his breast. Half delirious with these thoughts and from pain and loss of blood, he again essayed to burst open the door. In vain!

Then his eye fell on the iron bar, and a gleam of hope lighted up his face as he thought he saw a means to escape. He stooped and picked it up, but as he did so, staggered and fell, so weak was he. He again rose, however, and set to work to prise open the door. The sight he now presented was a hideous one. His back and side were saturated with blood—the floor of the hut was damp with the vital fluid, and, as he fell this last time, part of his shirt, and even his face, had become imbued with it.

Stained with gore, racked with pain of body and terror of mind, his eyes dim and heavy, his breath coming gaspingly—his failing limbs trembling—he was now, indeed, a pitiable object, if pity could ever be awarded to so great a ruffian. The bits of taper stuck on the table burned low down, as did the powers of life in the body of Jabez Haek.

Still, though he had little strength left, he had dead weight, and having inserted the iron bar, hoped, not without reason, to force open the door, by using it as a lever.

Ah, it yields!—and a faint cry of joy escapes him. There is water near, and that will satisfy his thirst and stop the fatal drain on his life-blood.

Once again he inserts the bar and gets a fresh hold, but at that supreme moment, when one sustained and desperate effort would be crowned with success, he stops and listens.

A cry of terror breaks from him.

He hears the quick tread of some one running up the track.

Perhaps it is a friend!

The thought causes his heart to beat wildly for a few moments.

He looks from the crevice in the door, and a pallor, as of the dead, steals over his face.

The bar drops from his nerveless hand, for he sees his

foe, the Hyæna, running at full speed towards the hut, and his glazing eye notices, by the moonlight, that he carries unsheathed in his right hand his deadly knife.

Dizzy and faint, as much from terror as weakness, he staggered back and leaned against the table. Then he thought of the iron bar, and possessed himself of it, propping it up by the side of him.

Scarcely had he done so, when the door was thrown open.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A CHAPTER OF HORRORS.

HYÆNA JONES paused on the threshold, and looked on Jabez as might a cat on a mouse already utterly at its mercy, and half dead from the effects of its claws.

Jabez attempted a sickly smile, and said, faintly, while his face grew livid, even to the lips—

“Say, ole hoss, I’m in a bad way. You’ve got the best o’ me this time, anyhow. I give in, licked; so let’s hev no more words about it.”

Anxiously he waited for an answer, but none came. The Hyæna regarded him with deadly malignity, and he could see the mulatto’s fingers playing nervously with the handle of his long knife.

Instinctively the left hand of Jabez Hack moved slowly and grasped the iron bar.

“Put—down—that—bar!”

The words came slowly and deliberately, hissed out like the threatening noise issuing from the throat of a serpent.

“But it’s all right, ain’t it, Jones, old feller? You ken hev the gal, and my share o’ the dollars, too, for the matter o’ that. You’re a darned sight too clever for me.”

“Yes, I’ll have the gal, and all the dollars,” was the reply, in the same terrible voice. “Put—down—that—bar!”

“Well, you won’t hurt me—I’m a’most done for now—will you, Hyæna?”

"Put—down—that—bar!"

Feeling himself growing weaker each moment, Jabez Hack obeyed; and with a deep groan, half of pain, half of terror, let it fall rattling to the ground.

"Move away from the table!" was the next order.

"Jones, old buck," whined Jabez, "I'm too bad; I can't scarce stand."

"Move to the other end of the table, then, and lean there."

And the speaker at the same time advancing a step, the knife gleamed ominously in the eyes of the wounded man.

He moved away as ordered, seemingly unable now to resist.

When he was at the farther end of the table, Hyæna Jones burst into a loud laugh.

"Well, you are a fool, Jabez Hack—the cussedest fool as ever lived. You might ha' killed me half a minit back; now you're no more use nor a sick skunk."

"Might ha' killed you! but I don't want to kill you, Jones. How might I ha' killed you?"

"Why, you tarnation fool, in your tussle wi' the gal you dropped your pistol, and it fell under the table, close to where you were standing."

Jabez looked, and groaned in spirit as he saw that it was so, bitterly cursing his folly in forgetting it. The fact was, that the shock, when he was shot in the shoulder, combined with the pain, had quite unnerved him, and all the while he was trying to escape he never thought of his revolver.

"What, then, were his feelings, as the Hyæna went on—

"You cussed white owl, you!—why, all the while you was standing this end, my six-shooter was a lyin' on the table, where I'd laid it down and forgot it. You could ha' reached it wi' your hand, and ha' shot me as I stood."

Jabez looked and saw that it was so, and again cursed his folly. It was too late for him to repossess himself of his revolver now, for the other stepped quietly forward, possessed himself of it, and placed it in his belt. This action brought some little comfort to Hack.

"Ah! then," he thought, "he ain't a-goin' to shoot me."

Unconsciously he spoke aloud, for he was now in a state of semi-delirium, conscious only of his deadly peril.

"No, I ain't a-goin' to shoot yer. I'm a-goin' to knife yer, like I would a sheep or a hog. I'm fond o' stickin' hogs, I am; and how fine it is when the hot blood comes spurtin' over yer hand, and the porker a-squeakin' like blue blazes all the while! Oh! it's fun—yes, sirree. Wonder if you'll squeak, Jabez, when I whip Colonel Bowie up under yer ribs!"

Jabez Hack's hair stood on end as he listened to the mulatto's horrible pleasantry—pleasantry which his quailing soul told him might become a deadly reality.

"Ah! you're on'y jokin' now, Hyæna, air yer?" he faltered, in tones intended to be conciliating.

"Ha, ha! Hyæna! You call me Hyæna, and expect mercy. Did you ever hear of a merciful hyæna, eh, you slave-driving dog?" shouted Jones, working himself up into sudden frenzy.

"No, no; I didn't mean no harm. I didn't mean to call you Hyæna."

"But I am a hyæna, and I will be a hyæna. I'd like to murder every white man, woman and child in America—eat their hearts, and drink their blood! *I would—I would!*"

And now the mulatto absolutely yelled with fury.

In a moment or two he was calm again, and advanced slowly towards Jabez Hack, knife in hand.

The latter cowered back away from him.

"Don't go on so, Jones. You don't mean it, I know."

"Dont I? I tell you I do."

"No, no—don't, Jones. I'll give yer all the dollars I've got down at my house—a big pile, I tell yer."

"A big pile! Right. I'll go and take 'em arter you're a stiff 'un. There's only the ole 'ooman, and I'll get her out o' the way, I warrant."

Nearer and nearer came the bloodthirsty Hyæna. Hack groaned and prayed, and shrank right back to the slabs.

"No, no! Mercy! mercy!" he cried, as he saw the deadly knife raised, and the mulatto preparing to carry his breat into execution.

"Mercy! a hyæna's mercy!—the mercy you show to niggers' backs, you cussed hound, you!"

His teeth gleamed white, bared to the gums—his face perfectly demoniacal in expression—his body crouching for a leap on the poor wounded wretch who shrank and trembled before him.

"Now I'm goin' to knife yer, Jabez."

The knife flashed high in air. Jabez screamed aloud with terror, and then with a bound the Hyæna sprang upon his prey.

Jabez would have been hurled to the ground had he not fallen against the slabs.

He was a powerful, heavy man, and when he felt the sharp dig of Jones's long knife in his ribs he shrieked aloud, and gathering, all his strength, endeavoured to hurl his wild-cat adversary away from him. The effort had only the effect of causing both to fall together on the ground, now soaked with the blood of the wounded man. Over and over they rolled, Jabez seeming for a moment or two to have derived fresh strength, Antæus-like, from his contact with the earth.

But it could not last.

Shriek after shriek broke from his lips, as again and again the cruel knife of the Hyæna is plunged into him. Over and over they rolled, and every now and again that thirsty blade would be plunged into his body.

Coming in contact with the half-closed door, it flew wide open; they rolled out together into the moonlight, still locked in a deadly embrace.

The death-struggle of Jabez Hack was, indeed, a fierce one—a stouter fight than could have been expected.

Over and over, in the bright light of the moon, they rolled and tusselled, the wretched Hack yelling in agony as the knife again and again sought his vitals, the hilt coming with a dull thud against his ribs more than once.

It was soon over, not lasting a minute at the outside, and then the Hyæna rose panting from the gasping, dying body of the ex-slave driver, pierced with many stabs, any one of which would have been fatal.

"If he gets over that, I'll swallow my bowie," he said, presently, as he leaned against the hut, calmly regarding

the death-throes of his victim. "I whipped my knife in five times below the ribs and six atween 'em, to my certain knowledge, not to count scratches and cuts about the head and limbs."

The mulatto wiped his knife on the leg of his pants, and going up to the body, still quivering and warm, turned the face upwards with his foot. The features, distorted with the death agonies and smeared with blood, worked horribly, and the eyes rolled and seemed starting from their sockets. Altogether it was a sight to inspire any ordinary man with terror.

But it had no such effect on the murderer; he surveyed his work with triumphant joy.

"Aha! my bully boy," he cried, exultingly, "guess you've got your gruel! Another d——d white man to me! The worms shall have your body, and the devil have your soul!"

For some time he stood over the murdered man, and gloatingly watched the distorted and blood-stained features fix in the rigidity of death. Then, when the rolling eyes had glazed over and settled into a ghastly heavenward stare, the heavy jaw had dropped, and the once strong limbs lay stretched and motionless, the Hyæna advanced to the feet of the corpse.

"Now, my fine feller, we'll jest drag you into the swamp-brush a bit, so as the crows shan't be disturbed pickin' your eyes out."

Then he caught hold of the dead man's feet, and commenced dragging him along. But the body of Jabez was heavy, and, though the Hyæna was lithe and muscular, he had difficulty in dragging it. He managed to do so, however, by a series of sharp pulls or jerks, and, dreadful to relate, he regulated these to the time of a cotton-screening sailor chant, known as "Rolling John."

"Rolling John and I together—

Ha! ha! Rolling John!

Both set out in windy weather—

Ha! ha! Rolling John!

Hurrah! my dandy!

Ha! ha! Rolling John!

“Yankee sloop came down the river—
Ha! ha! Rolling John!
Loaded deep with rum and sugar—
Ha! ha! Rolling John!
Hurrah! my dandy!
Ha! ha! Rolling John.”

At each “Ha! ha!” the Hyæna tugged vigorously at the legs of the corpse, as would the “hoosiers” at the cotton screens, or sailors on a rope.

To this “shanty,” as a hunting song is called, the murderer, with hideous levity, dragged his victim down the track a little way, and then into the scrub. Having thus conveyed the dead body some fifty or sixty yards away from the hut, he deposited it in some thick undergrowth, and prepared to leave. As he was making his way back, however, not without difficulty, for the ground was very wet and heavy, he suddenly stopped and turned short round. He heard something.

Ay, and now he saw something, which made his teeth chatter in his head.

He saw a form arise from among the brushwood where he had laid the corpse, and then fell on his ears the same song he had been just singing:—

“Yankee sloop came down the river—
Ha! ha! Rolling John!
Loaded deep with rum and sugar—
Ha! ha! Rolling John!
Hurrah! my dandy!
Ha! ha! Rolling John.”

The Hyæna saw a dark figure partially concealed by the brushwood. He thought he could recognize the form and features of the murdered man.

“The ghost of Jabez Haek!” he cried, and then, shrieking with terror, he turned and fled. He ran down towards the track.

After he had regained it, he ran for some distance, and then, finding he was not followed, he stopped. He was livid and trembling with terror, not doubting for a moment that it was a phantom he had seen.

He listened, and again heard in the distance the monotonous refrain,—

“Ha! ha! Rolling John!”

Terror-stricken, he again took to flight, nor stopped till he was close to the place where he had left Lola and the carriage.

It is a strange thing, but nevertheless true, that supernatural terrors have most power over the human mind in solitude. When there are two or more together, a phantom, real or fancied, does not excite the same shuddering fear.

It was so in this case. When he knew he was near another person—though that was one whom he had so deeply injured, and who had reason to hate and curse him—he felt relieved, and when he halted, not hearing the sounds which had so frightened him, he became re-assured.

“Who’d ha’ thought the feller’s ghost ’ould ha’ come so quick? ’Spees he means haunting me.”

The thought was not a pleasant one, so he dismissed it as well as he could, and proceeded to look for the carriage.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

LOLA FREES HER HANDS, AND FIRES HER PISTOL.

WHEN Hyæna Jones drove Lola before him with a halter round her neck, he made straight for the place where the vehicle in which she had been kidnapped was left. Having seen that the horse was all right and properly fastened, he made the girl stand against a tree, to which he prepared to bind her.

“You see, my gal,” he said, “I’m goin’ back to look arter poor Jabez. Ha! ha!—he! he! An’ as I’ve had a good deal o’ trouble catchin’ you, I don’t mean to lose you if I can help it. No, sirree. So just stand with your back close agin ~~the~~ little tree, while I tie you up safe and comfortable.”

Then he proceeded to pass a rope round her elbows, and quickly fastened her securely to the tree.

Would he bind her hands afresh? This was the question she asked herself, and waited in desperate anxiety for the event.

If he did not bind her hands more securely, and left her for any considerable time, there was just a chance for her to escape.

Great was her relief when he said—

"There, I think that'll fix yer till I come back. You may just as well keep quiet, as you can't get away."

Then he hastened away. She listened, and waited till the noise of his forcing himself through the scrub ceased, and when she heard him running up the road, she proceeded in her effort to free her hands. It was a task of great difficulty, and so excruciating was the pain that again and again she was forced to desist. But her strong determination and desperate desire to escape nerved her to bear the agony, and at last, by a desperate wrench, which forced from her a cry of anguish, she freed her right hand. Now that one was free, to remove the cords from the other was not so difficult a task.

At last both hands were free, and she found with joyous hope that though the wrists were terribly bruised and swollen, she yet could use them to good purpose.

Next she turned her attention to the cords which bound her by the waist and elbows to the tree. Alas! all her efforts could not even relax these. She tried for full five minutes, and her heart sank within her when she found that it was an impossible task.

Her thoughts suddenly flew to the pistol, and again her heart beat with hope when she found she could reach it. To unfasten her dress in front, and draw it from its hiding-place, was not the work of many moments. She examined it by the moonlight, and saw that it was safe and sound—capped, loaded, and ready for use, as she always carried it.

A flush of joy arose to her face at the thought that she could now defend herself, perhaps successfully, against her enemy. But this was greatly damped when she discovered that, cramped as she was by the cords around her waist and elbows, she could not raise her hand. This would render her aim very uncertain, as she had never practised firing from the hip. She turned the pistol in all directions, and

once, when the muzzle pointed to her own breast, a stern delight swept over her soul. Her life was in her own hands, and, failing to kill or disable the Hyæna, she could easily put an end to her own existence. She firmly resolved that she would do so rather than remain alive in his power. The idea of suicide had scarcely ever presented itself to her before; but now that she thought of it, she welcomed this mode of deliverance with open arms.

Knowing that it was a hopeless task to free herself from the cords which bound her elbows, she waited calmly and resolutely for the return of her persecutor, determined to aim as well as she could, and fire barrel after barrel at him, in hopes of killing him. Should all fail but the last—that she would use on herself, rather than again be at his mercy.

Alone in that dismal swamp, she waited for the return of her enemy, and for that final desperate struggle which should end his life or hers.

At last she heard the footfalls of a man running, and she knew that the moment which should decide her fate was close at hand.

On came the assassin, fleeing from the scene of his crime, and but just recovered from his terror at the apparition.

But though he had had a bad scare, he by no means repented of the past, or felt more mercifully inclined towards his unhappy prisoner. The ghost of Jabez Hack (for he had no doubt at the time it was indeed so) did not follow him, so his alarm quickly subsided, and he made all speed back to the place where he had left Lola.

She heard him come crashing through the branches of the scrub, and the occasional splash of his foot when he stepped in one of the puddles of stagnant water which abounded in that marshy ground, and which in his haste he did not take sufficient pains to avoid. At this moment clouds partially obscured the moon.

Intently listening, her eyes as intently staring towards the direction where she expected to see his hated form, she stood, with pistol firmly grasped, prepared to do battle for her honour—ay, her life—for she had determined not to fall into his hands alive.

She had no doubt whatever that it was he who approached. Her senses seemed preternaturally sharpened, and she recognized his footstep, so had no distracting doubts to impair her resolution. Hyæna Jones was coming, and *he* or she must die!

At last she saw a form emerge from the dark shade of the foliage and advance towards her. Again, for a moment, the figure was hidden by some interposing bush, again to appear in sight.

Facing her there was a space clear of high shrubs for about twenty yards. The vegetation did not reach above a man's knee, and was only in patches. In another moment she had a clear view of her deadly foe as he emerged into this clear space. She let him come within fifteen yards of her, and then, aiming as truly as she could, she said—

“Hyæna Jones, if I kill you, your blood be on your own head.”

He paused for a moment, as if not understanding what she said, and then laughed his horrid laugh. Lola, remembering the advice of Captain George, who had given her the pistol, lowered the muzzle, as she thought sufficiently, and fired.

The bullet wounded the mulatto slightly on the left hip, and caused him to leap on one side so suddenly as to stumble and fall.

A cry of fierce joy broke from the girl. She thought she had killed or mortally wounded him. Alas! she was soon undeceived; for he sprang quickly to his feet, and appeared to gaze around in bewilderment. The fact was, he could not for the moment make it out. He could see the girl still standing with her back to the tree, bound as he had left her, he supposed. His first thought was that some one had come to her aid, and had fired from behind the tree, she standing motionless in order to decoy him on. With a savage oath, he was about to turn and fly, when the moon burst through the clouds, and he distinctly saw the girl standing bound by the elbows, with the pistol in her hand.

The next instant another bullet whizzed through the air, passing close to his head. He saw the flash, and knew that it came from her pistol. Without stopping to think, he

ran and concealed himself behind some of the scrub close by. When thus comparatively safe, he proceeded to think over and account for these shots.

She was still bound by the elbows and waist, at least, for he had seen the cords. But the pistol? And her hands—how had she freed them?

At last the truth burst upon him. He concluded rightly that she had been able to free her hands and possess herself of a revolver she had about her, but could not loose her arms. He laughed a triumphant laugh; for he saw a way out of the difficulty. Cunning as the serpent, and fertile in expedients, he placed himself in such a position as to see her without being seen. Having ascertained that the bullet had merely cut away the skin from his hip-bone, he watched her carefully for a moment or two. He could observe that her head moved quickly all around, and that the hand which held the pistol followed her look.

"She's as keen as a panther watching for its prey," he muttered, and ground his teeth as he felt the smart of the bullet-graze on his hip, and knew how narrow had been his escape. "But I'll fix her. Ha! ha! the cunning slut—she can't get free. I know how to fix her."

The Hyæna laughed and chuckled over the success of the plan he had in view—a plan which appeared certain of success. He was in no hurry, but remained watching her, and gloated over the thought of her standing before him unarmed and still bound to the tree, as she would be in a few minutes' time. Then, ah! how he would avenge himself for her attempt to shoot him.

He chuckled over the thought of the refinements of torture and insult he would practise—how he would torment her, abuse her, cause her cheek to crimson with shame—and she all the while utterly powerless and at his mercy!

The thought of his coming triumph was delirious joy to the wretch's black soul.

But we cannot pursue his thoughts farther. Let us rather return to Lola, who remained alert and watchful, ready to fire again the instant she had a fair opportunity. She had no thought of mercy. Indeed, she would have been to blame had she hesitated to slay this inhuman ruffian, who knew not the meaning of the word pity.

Presently, and after a long and dreary interval, she saw a figure start up and run swiftly across and among the scrub. To have fired would have been to throw away a shot, and it was thousands to one against her hitting him. Soon she became aware that he was circling round to her right; but at first the object he had in view did not occur to her. She followed him with her eyes, and presently had to turn her head over her right shoulder, to keep sight of the shadowy form flitting along among the brush and rank growth. Then she was forced to strain the cords hard, in order to turn her body a little, to keep him in view.

At last—though she used her whole strength and twisted her neck till it ached—she could turn no farther, and he passed from her view.

“He has gone, thank Heaven!” was her first thought.

Her next was to her own fate.

“Ah! some one will surely be passing along the road after daylight, and I can call them to my aid by my cries, or by firing the pistol. As it is, I must resign myself to stand thus for the rest of this wretched night.”

After the perils, pain, and hardships she had undergone, this seemed easy, as the cords, though firmly bound around her, did not actually hurt. Indeed, she almost thought that, leaning up against the tree, she might snatch a little sleep. She was not now annoyed by thirst, and altogether things did not look quite so bad.

Presently she began to wonder to herself what had caused him to decamp. It was unlike him—not consistent with his relentless, determined nature.

“Ah!” she thought to herself, “I have been fortunate enough to wound him. I saw him fall at my first fire. And yet—and yet—he ran very swiftly for a wounded man.”

Scarcely had this faint misgiving as to his having departed for good crossed her mind, than she heard a stealthy footstep behind her.

Then she screamed aloud in the extremity of her agony and terror.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

HYÆNA JONES BAFFLED.

LOLA instantly appreciated the imminence of her peril—the almost utter hopelessness of her position. The crafty Hyæna, seeing that she was still bound by the elbows and waist, had made a circuit, and was approaching her from behind.

She could hear the stealthy, cat-like tread, and knew too well that it was her relentless persecutor who approached.

A moment or two back, and she had thought herself comparatively safe; and now no wretch on the scaffold awaiting the offices of the executioner could be in a more dismal plight.

With desperate energy she strained her bonds, and endeavoured to wrench her body round, so that she might be able to see and confront her enemy. A wailing cry was forced from her by the pain of this supreme effort, which, alas! was utterly unavailing, for the cords were skilfully tied and strong, while she was weak.

But though she was unsuccessful in freeing herself, or even loosening her bonds, the attempt caused the occurrence of an unexpected and important circumstance. She still held the pistol, and suddenly, to her utter surprise, the dagger with which it was furnished sprang out with a sharp click.

She had unwittingly touched the spring, and now she had reason to bless the lucky chance which caused Captain George to give her that particular pistol.

The edges of the dagger were very sharp, and as it glamed before her eyes, the use she could put it to flashed simultaneously across her mind. She could reach her left elbow with her right hand, and swiftly inserting the sharp-bladed dagger between her flesh and the rope, using her utmost strength, straining every nerve—she, with one sweep, severed the cords which bound her arm to the tree.

Another cut, equally vigorous and swift, divided the rope which passed around her waist, and then the cords dropped from her right arm, and, behold! just as Hyæna Jones, creeping cautiously up, was within two or three paces, she found herself once again free!

Free! armed and determined! her heart once again bounding with hope!

Swiftly she confronted her surprised enemy, with levelled pistol!

"Ha, villain!" she cried, with fierce joy, "you thought not to meet an armed enemy—only a helpless girl. This to your coward's heart!"

She fired, and instantly Hyæna Jones staggered back, limped a few paces, and fell—wounded—mortally so, for all she cared. For a moment she deliberated whether or no to walk up to him and make sure of his death by discharging another barrel of the pistol at his heart.

Infamous wretch as he was—little pity as he deserved at her hands—nevertheless her soul revolted from the thought of slaying a wounded man.

It would have been better far had no such scruple stood in her way.

"I will leave him to his fate—probably he is shot through the body and will die. And now to make my escape to a place of safety!"

Close by was the vehicle in which she had been abducted. The horse, tethered by the halter to a peg driven in the ground, was quietly munching the herbage in his reach. To unfasten the animal, mount the box, and commence driving away, was but the work of a very few moments. Lola, though she could not tell exactly where she was, yet knew in which direction the city lay. The rough track from which they had deviated when the carriage was driven into the swamp must lead somewhere—probably into a larger or main road. In this surmise she was not wrong, and soon succeeded in gaining the broad road which ran by the *Levéé* parallel with the river. The ground was wet and heavy, however, and it took her some considerable time to pilot the vehicle through the thick brushwood and out into the road—so long, indeed, that her enemy had been enabled to return to the hut, possess himself of his own pistol and that

of the murdered man, and then cut across and strike the road between her and the city of New Orleans.

In place of being mortally hurt he had received only a flesh wound in the right thigh, which, though painful, did not incapacitate him from action.

Urged on by fury and disappointed passion, he took swift and sure measures again to get her into his power.

He emerged on to the road some quarter of a mile lower down than where the carriage did, and he could just see and hear it approaching. There was ample time for him to make his arrangements. A few logs, which he found lying about, a small tree blown down by the wind, and what brushwood he could collect, made a barrier which it was impossible a carriage could pass. Having done this, he concealed himself within easy pistol shot and waited—chuckling to himself the while, and confident of his ability to again capture the girl. He knew that she could only have three shots left in her pistol, while he had five barrels undischarged of his own, and four of the dead man's.

Totally unconscious of danger, Lola drove on down the road, congratulating herself on her happy escape. She did not notice the obstruction until close upon it. Hyæna Jones might have secured her without a struggle had he employed more caution. Exulting in the success of his plan, however, he betrayed his presence—when she pulled up the horse, and just as she was about to alight, in order to inspect and remove the barrier to her further progress.

The first intimation she had of his presence was his repulsive, chuckling laugh, which she heard among the bush.

Her first emotion was unqualified surprise. "He is not then dead!" she said to herself. But immediately she appreciated the imminence of her peril.

"You may as well come in quiet, my fine gal!" she heard his voice say, "I've got you fixed ter rights. I've got three loaded barrels to your one; so if the worst comes to the worst I ken reckon on yer dead eurple, anyhow. Chuck down that ere popgun o' yours. I ken see you, and hev got you covered—while you can't spot me. Down wi' it, I say, or I'll shoot!"

Lola gazed wildly around for a moment or two; then,

tugging at one rein, she flogged the horse, and so caused him to turn short round in the road. It was not to be supposed that the Hyæna would suffer his prey to escape him thus, and scarcely had she succeeded in turning the vehicle than the sharp crack of his revolver is heard, and a pistol-ball whistled through the air in dangerous proximity.

Hyæna Jones shouted to her to stop, and backed up his command by a volley of horrible oaths. Heedless of this, however, and the second bullet which followed, she whipped up the horse, and ere he could fire a third time was proceeding back along the way she had come at a sharp pace.

The Hyæna, furious at seeing his plan so easily foiled, rushed from his concealment, and ran to overtake the carriage. But now the girl had him at a disadvantage. Turning on the box-seat of the vehicle she could see him running by the side of the road, while her body was concealed, her head only being visible to him over the roof. The horse was jaded, and the road bad, so it was no very difficult matter for her pursuer to gain on her, wounded as he was.

"Hyæna Jones," she cried, levelling her pistol when he was quite close, "stop, or I will shoot you!"

He could see the gleaming barrel of the pistol levelled at him over the top of the carriage, and not thinking it advisable to risk it, he forthwith plunged from the road, and sought shelter in the obscurity of the scrub.

Still, however, he kept on running, and keenly watching. She could hear him crashing along, and occasionally see his form as he ran. Urging the horse by whip and voice, she just managed to keep ahead of him, and prevent his getting in front.

His object, she shrewdly guessed, was to get a good start, then conceal himself, and fire at his leisure as she passed.

This was, if possible, to be provided against, for under such circumstances the advantage would be all on his side. He would be concealed among the vegetation which lined the road, while she would be in full view. The Hyæna was a fleet runner, and, well aware of the importance of the object in view, strained every nerve to pass ahead of the carriage.

He gained slowly but surely, and by the time the vehicle passed the plank-track leading up to the hut where he had murdered Jabez Hack, he was nigh abreast.

Still he knew that to fire as he ran would probably be only to waste a shot, so he, by a desperate effort, increased his speed, and hurried a few yards ahead. Lola, however, was aware of this, and in turn urged and flogged the horse to fresh exertion, and in the course of a minute or so came up with and passed the running form of her deadly enemy.

It now became a question of endurance.

The Hyæna put on another spurt, and again caught up with the galloping horse; but, though he strained every nerve, he was unable to pass more than a yard or so ahead.

It seemed probable that the horse would last the longest, more especially as the wound in his thigh was bleeding, and, as a consequence, he was getting momentarily weaker.

Under these circumstances, her pursuer resolved on a bold and desperate course, which he promptly put in action.

Darting suddenly from the scrub he ran up alongside of the horse, and aiming just behind the animal's shoulder, fired. The horse reared as he felt the fatal wound, then, with a neighing scream, fell over on his side, at the same time oversetting the carriage. The Hyæna saw Lola thrown to the ground with great violence, and lie apparently motionless on the other side of the road.

With a cry of triumphant joy he went round the rear of the carriage in order to secure his victim, whom he supposed to have been stunned by the fall.

Once more, however, the villain was disappointed; for, as he hastened up to the place where, a few moments before, he had seen her lying apparently insensible, he just caught the flutter of her dress as she disappeared in the dark shades of the swamp-bush.

With a furious oath he started in pursuit; but he had already been running at his utmost speed for some quarter of an hour, and was all but exhausted. The girl, on the other hand, was comparatively fresh, and he quickly found that he could not gain upon her. She had every motive to put forth her utmost energy, and in the course of half a minute he became aware that she was escaping from him.

He could see her dress some fifty yards ahead of him as she crossed an open glade.

Panting with exertion, his eyes bloodshot with disappointed rage, he threw himself on his knee by the side of a huge log, and resting the pistol on this he took deliberate aim and fired.

The shot failed, and the next instant the fugitive disappeared from view.

Bitter were the curses of the Hyæna as he thus saw the escape of his prey. Even now, however, though further pursuit seemed hopeless, he would not give up, but at a slackened pace again ran on, inclining his course, however, to the road. He again emerged out on this in a few minutes, and could just discern, nearly a quarter of a mile ahead, the form of the slave-girl, who, after such a terrible ordeal, had at last escaped from his clutches.

He still ran steadily on, though each minute increased the distance between them; all the while he kept on blaspheming and reviling in a terrible manner. Suddenly, however, he stopped dead. He saw the figure on which he steadfastly kept his eyes suddenly cease running. In a moment, however, she again moved on, but in a direction at right angles to the road.

"Thunder and snakes!—eternal cusses on her! She've took the plantation road."

He seemed to be astonished, and partly bewildered, at this.

"Wall, if this don't lick everything!" he muttered. "She's got the best o' me this time, sartin sure. Here I am, tired to death, and shot in the leg, and the gal got clear away. If any one had told me as that cussed yaller gal could ha' beat me that way, I wouldn't ha' believed it. I'll kill her for this night's work—if I don't——"

He ground his teeth at the thought, and then turning, he slowly and lingeringly made his way back.

As he got cool his wounded leg grew more painful, and when he arrived by the side of the overturned carriage he was groaning with pain. To his dismay, he found that the horse was dead; so he found himself weak and wounded, a long distance from help, and with no means of conveyance. It seemed quite probable that he might perish by the road

side—a just punishment for his crimes. Limpingly, with halting step, the baffled ruffian made the best of his way along the deserted, dreary road, the silence broken only by his own groans and the croakings of the bull-frogs in the swamp.

Thus we will leave him, and see how it fared with Lola, who ~~has~~ been the heroine of these chapters.

CHAPTER XL.

THE DOVE-COT.

At first her sole object in running at her utmost speed along the road was to escape from her pursuer, to place the greatest possible distance between herself and him. But when she found, to her great joy, that she was certainly outstripping him, and could do so with ease, she began to cast about her as to whither she should direct her flight. Presently she came to a place where there diverged another road, running at right angles to the one by the Levée. Apparently this led up to some plantation or village; for though it was not so broad as the Levée road, it bore marks of frequent traffic. Looking up this she saw, at a considerable distance—probably nearly a mile—a light shining through the trees, on a portion of ground raised slightly above the surrounding dead level. This she knew must proceed from some house, and at once turned her steps in that direction.

“At least I can depend on receiving shelter and protection from my brutal enemies,” she thought, as she made her way towards the light.

She no longer ran at full speed when she found that she was no longer followed, but still made good haste, and in less than a quarter of an hour approached the building. It was a large, strongly-built house, having no peculiarities to distinguish it from many others she had seen. There were fenced-in paddocks surrounding it, and at a little distance she could make out the outlines of a number of huts and shed. Obviously the quarters of the negroes on the estate

The large house was as certainly the abode of the master of the plantation.

Without waiting to think, Lola went up to the front door and knocked with the butt end of the pistol she still carried. The light which had attracted her attention was on the first floor; but when she knocked, after a moment's pause, as though the person who was up there was listening, she heard a footstep descend the staircase, and approach the door.

"Who is there?"

The voice was muffled, as though the speaker feared to speak in his natural tones. A sudden thrill shot through her frame, for it seemed to her that she had heard the tone of the voice before—that it was familiar to her.

But on the impulse of the moment, she answered—

"Open, in the name of Heaven! It is an unfortunate who seeks protection from her enemies, rest, and shelter."

She heard a half-suppressed exclamation, and the next moment the door was thrown wide open. The person who did so stood behind, so Lola only saw a good-sized entrance-hall, from which there issued a passage and two flights of stairs.

Thus hesitating one brief moment only, she placed her pistol in its sheath beneath her dress, and then entered. Instantly the door was quickly closed, and she heard the key turn in the lock.

Startled, she faced round abruptly, and a cry of dismay escaped her, for she stood in the presence of the arch-villain, Varley Fang, the cause of all her misery, the instigator and prime mover in her abduction.

"Welcome to my house, Miss Lola! I have been expecting you for some time"

The girl was for a time utterly prostrated by this fresh and totally unexpected calamity.

"Expecting me?" she faltered.

"Yes, expecting you! All fair in love and war, sweet Lola. I trust my little stratagem for obtaining possession of you may be pardoned. I can only plead the deep passion I feel for you as my excuse."

There was a tone of mocking triumph in his words, most offensive.

Recovering her self-possession, and stung by the insolence so apparent beneath the soft words of his speech, she said—

“Mr. Fang, I will leave here, if you please. I do not choose to accept hospitality from you, however greatly I may be in need thereof.”

She had a half hope that by seeming not to fear him she might best keep him at bay. Then she remembered her pistol, which had already done her such good service, and hope did not entirely die away in her breast. She noticed that Varley Fang was cloaked, spurred, and booted, as though for a journey. It now wanted some two hours of daylight, and it appeared that he was going out or had just returned. She judged that the latter was not the case, for his boots were unsoiled.

“Now look here, young woman, we may as well understand each other. I tell you at once that I don’t intend to part with you except on my own terms. Escape is utterly hopeless. I have here, within call, plenty who are devoted to my service. I pay them well, and so long as I do so they are utterly unscrupulous. I cannot stay to parley with you now, as I am going forth on a mission of deep importance, which even the fortunate windfall of your appearance at my door cannot induce me to neglect. You can have food and rest yourself in a room which I will order to be prepared for you. I see you have had rough usage, and need repose; also that your dress is torn, your flesh bruised and scratched; there is, too, a cut on your shoulder, which must be seen to. I’ve no intention of being unnecessarily cruel, but I will have my way. I shall be back in twelve or fourteen hours; till then I shall consign you to the care of an old negress, whom I can trust.”

Then he raised his voice and called—

“Juno—Juno!” Come here, you old hag!”

Lola remained standing; a tumult of thought, of hopes and fears, passing through her mind. She was in the power of the man whom, of all others, next to Hyæna Jones, she hated and dreaded. As unscrupulous and cruel as the mulatto, he was even more to be dreaded, by reason of his superior forethought and craftiness. She well knew that Varley Fang would not make any such clumsy errors in

judgment as those on the part of the Hyæna which had enabled her to escape from him.

If Varley Fang had bound her to the tree, he would have done it in such a way that she could not free her hands. Nor would he have committed the error of allowing her to turn and escape by the way she had come when the onward passage of the carriage had been barred. These things she knew instinctively, and yet did not utterly despair. She had concealed the pistol as she entered, and herein lay her great hope. At present he had no suspicion that she was armed, and to keep from him that fact should be her earnest endeavour.

For the present she resolved to temporize, and, as he was evidently going forth on some errand or other, take advantage of his absence to secure that rest which was so needful.

These thoughts passed rapidly through her mind as she stood before Fang, who was awaiting the coming of the woman he had summoned.

She shuddered involuntarily as her eye fell on the negress, who at this moment shuffled in, in obedience to her master's call.

Old, ugly, and repulsive-looking, Juno was attired only in a dirty cotton gown, with a coloured handkerchief tied round her head. Two large teeth—one on each side of her mouth—appeared more conspicuous and tusk-like from the absence of their fellows. Thin, with a skin as black as coal, and small, keen, wicked-looking eyes, poor Lola could discover nothing re-assuring in the look of the woman to whose care she was to be confided.

"What! anoder one, Massa Fang?" the old crone mumbled. "O! my lor' a massy, you is a debbil for de gals! And dis one's white, too, and all in bootiful satin. Begun to git tired o' nigger wenches, eh, massa?"

"You are wrong, Juno; this girl is a slave."

"Dat gal a nigger wench? why, she's whiter nor you, Massa Fang!"

"Never you mind, Juno; I'm going out. Take her to the dove-cot, make her comfortable, and see that she doesn't escape, or even attempt it. I shall let the bloodhounds loose in the court-yard, and I reckon they'll give a good account

of any stranger. I'd be sorry for your delicate skin to be torn by those fierce dogs, young woman, but they would assuredly pull you down and kill you, if you should be foolish enough to venture outside the house unaccompanied by some one they know."

"I don't fear your dogs, Varley Fang," she said, defiantly, "nor you either. Heaven will aid and protect me, and deliver me from your power!"

Fang laughed a harsh, mocking laugh, which grated on her ear, and told her how safely he thought he had her in his clutches.

"Well, it will be very kind of Heaven, I'm sure, that's all I have to say. Now, Juno, show the lady to the dove-cot, get her dry clothes, provide her with food and everything she wants; but, as you value your hide, don't get chattering or let her escape you."

"O'r right, massa. Dis way, young missa, and ole Juno'll take de pretty bird to de dove-cot!"

Lola hesitated a moment only, and then followed the negress up one of the flights of stairs. At the head of this was an iron gate, or door, reaching from floor to ceiling, which, on their passing, slammed behind them, as it were, spontaneously. Lola started, and a nervous tremour shook her frame. She began to doubt the prudence of her submitting thus without a struggle, and thought that possibly Fang's pretended excursion was but a ruse to quiet her.

However, it was too late now, and she silently followed the old negress, who went before, carrying the light. They passed through several rooms, then came to some steps, down which the negress led her, till she found herself, to her surprise, once more on the ground-floor of the house, but in what part of it she was unable to say. However, in a moment or two more, she found herself in a large kitchen, in the corner of which there was a closet, or wood-cellar. This the negress entered, and motioned Lola to follow her. The girl shrank back, and regretted now, most bitterly, having yielded so far.

"Come on, my gal," the old crone said, impatiently; "it's no use your bein' obstinate. If you don't come, I'll hev to call a couple o' bush-niggers to carry yer!"

Hereupon Lola yielded, and consoled herself with the

fierce thought that when Varley Fang visited her his life would be in her hands. Sternly she resolved that if he refused her her liberty, she would then and there snoot him without mercy. It was certain that he had no suspicion she was armed. Urged by these considerations, she resolved to obey, for a time at least. To resist now, and to use her pistol against any of his hirelings, would be the extreme of folly. Her only chance of safety lay in biding her time, and when the opportunity offered, ruthlessly slaying the arch-villain himself. Lola had not the faintest scruple on the point—she deliberately made up her mind that he should die, and by her hands, should no other help come. Well she knew that to temporize would be fatal, and, accordingly, she arranged a plan of action in her own mind; so she quietly followed the old crone, and in a very short time found herself in what she at first thought was a narrow passage or corridor leading elsewhere. But in this respect she was soon undeceived; the door did not open on hinges, but slid in grooves, and she at first thought that, from the ease with which it moved, it must be of slight construction. In this, however, she was greatly deceived, as she afterwards discovered. A lamp swung from the ceiling in the centre of the strange-shaped room. Lola could not distinguish the other end in the gloom, and thought that it was open, not supposing for a moment that this narrow place, where two people could scarcely pass, was a chamber in itself. But of this fact she soon became aware, for, placing the lamp she carried on a small shelf the old negress turned to her and said,—

“Dis am de dove-cot, missa—what you tink ob him?”

“Is this the place in which I am to be confined?”

“Dis is de dove-cot.”

Lola now took the light and closely inspected the room, if such it could be called. It was barely five feet wide, while in length it was quite forty. She saw, on examination, that there was a door at each end, not, as she thought at first, of slight construction, but of solid wood, heavily crossed with iron bars. At a distance of about six feet from each of these doors was a small table and a camp-stool, which together made it difficult to pass hurriedly. In the centre, opposite the swinging oil-lamp, and in a recess, which went

back a foot or two in the strong slab-wall, there was a couch or ottoman covered with crimson velvet, and at either end of this sofa a shelf or stand, on which glasses or dishes might be placed instead of on a table, which was wanting. A thick carpet was on the floor—a very unusual thing in the Southern States of America. The walls, up to the height of the shoulder, were padded with velvet cushions to match the ottoman, and above this were numerous pictures, none of which were modest, and some quite offensive to the eyes of any virtuous woman.

“You want eat—you want drink—you want wash—I bring.”

With these words the old negress left, and Lola was alone in the so-called dove-cot.

A further examination convinced her that to escape from here by violence was hopeless. There was no window of any sort or kind, and, night or day, the oil-lamp swinging from the centre gave the only light.

The walls were of solid thick planks or slabs, and even had she a hatchet and other tools, it would be a work of hours to cut a passage. Sounding carefully all along, she discovered that though there was a broken space—probably a room or chamber on the other side—the walls were of too great thickness and strength to afford any hope of breaking through, even had she attempted it.

Then she came to the conclusion that her only hope of safety lay in awaiting the coming of Varley Fang, and remorselessly killing him. Probably his creatures—those who now pandered to his passions from fear or self-interest—would rejoice at the death of their tyrant; at all events, it was unlikely that they would kil' her from revenge. On the other hand, she thought it more probable that, having still barrels undischarged, they would be terrified at the fate of their chief, and would allow her to depart.

While thus thinking, she heard a slight noise, and, grown cautious by necessity, glanced in the direction without seeming to take any notice. At the opposite end, and at a height of some eight feet from the ground, she saw that a small square hole had been opened above the door, and that a pair of eyes were fixed on her.

“Varley Fang!” she said to herself, and wisely refrain.

ing from looking again, she threw herself on the velvet-cushioned couch, as though quite exhausted. Then the little wicket was gently closed, and she knew that her enemy had gone, satisfied.

Shortly the old negress returned, bringing food, wine, and water with which to wash, also a change of linen, and such articles of toilette as were absolutely necessary.

Without waiting to be invited, the negress helped herself to some of the food, and also drank of the wine greedily.

"Yer won't tell the boss, miss, when he comes. Ole Venus rare and hungry. No get chicking and wine ebry day. Massa Fang he keep dem for de pretty birds he bring to de dove-cot."

"No, I shall not tell," replied the girl, quietly; "eat and drink as much as you please."

"Tank you, missa. Ole nigger 'ooman not forget—do anything for missa, 'cept let her out."

"Why will you not let me out?" asked Lola, suddenly. "I will pay you for it well—my friends are rich. If you will let me escape and come with me, I can promise you dollars enough to purchase your freedom a dozen times over."

The old woman looked hard at her, and then replied—

"Tain't no use, my gal: Massa Fang wouldn't sell me—I know him—he'd keep me and flog me to death; 'sides, I'se got to hab my son's freedom next month—dat's to say if I behave myself, and work de dove-cot."

"Work the dove-cot!" asked Lola, not understanding.

"Yes, work de dove-cot! Lor, missa! I'se bin a working de dove-cot dis two year. Massy me! what a sight o' pretty gals, nigger gals, yaller gals, and white gals, Massa Fang hab him hy on."

"And you, you wretched woman, pander to his vices, and aid your master in his villanous designs on unhappy creatures who, black, yellow, or white, are, like yourself, human and women."

"Wall, I s'pose I'se a woman—old and ugly mebbe, but I'se a woman; an' Varley Fang's my boss; an' ef I don't do 's he tells me I'm whipped; ef I do, my son gets his free papers, and me too, next year."

"Were your son a man, he would scorn to accept

freedom purchased at such a price—his mother's degradation and infamy."

"Hi! what's dat? ef he war a man—my boy Pompey ain't a man; dat's bin licked out o' him long ago."

"What is he, then?"

"On'y a slave!" replied the old woman, with a chuckle; "leastwise, 'tain't no good talking, I can't help yer, an' I don't mean to—that is, to get away afore de boss ha' done wi' you. So jest make yerself comfortable; eat an' drink, an' go to sleep. Look at dis hyar chicking, an' de white bread, an' pickled pork, an' good wine. Massy me! don't tink you've got much to holler about."

Lola saw that at present it was useless to talk more; so, well knowing that in the struggle for liberty and honour which was coming she would need all her strength and courage, she ate and drank, and after bathing her hurts, and arranging her disordered dress, she wrapped herself in a coarse blanket the old woman had brought, and, lying on the velvet couch, sought that repose which the fatigues and terrors of the past twenty-four hours had rendered so necessary.

Before allowing herself to doze off, however, she took care that the little pistol which had already done her such good service was convenient to her hand. Nor did she sleep at all, in the proper sense of the word, but merely sank into a dream-like state of half consciousness. Hour after hour passed and no one molested her, and at last she slept soundly and well.

When she awoke she had no idea of what was the time, though she thought that she must have lain thus for many hours. In reality, the whole day had passed, and another night approached.

"Ah! he will soon be here," she said to herself; "now I must nerve myself for my desperate task—no less than to slay as cruel and ruthless a scoundrel as ever trod the earth."

She had little or no hope of winning over the old negress to her aid, and therefore resolved to rely solely on herself and an all-merciful Providence.

Once more she examined the singular apartment in which she was a prisoner; but with no satisfactory result. She

found that the doors at either end were quite immovable, and that she was unable even to discover how they opened. The small aperture through which she had seen some one, doubtless Varley Fang, watching her, also was a subject for observation; but though by standing on one of the stools, she could just succeed in raising her head to that level, she was at once aware that no hope lay in that quarter. Then, springing to the ground, she paced up and down the narrow, thickly-carpeted room, and strove to work herself up to the necessary pitch of anger and indignation in order to carry out her design.

While thus walking restlessly to and fro, enter the old negress Juno.

"Ah, young missa! you hab good sleep, eh?"

"Yes; I think I have slept soundly. What is the time?"

"Night time jest come again."

"Ah, I thought so. It is cold."

"I bring some supper; hot horn-cake and coffee, and a lilly chicking."

"Where is Mr. Fang, your master?" asked Lola, presently.

"He jest come back; 'specs him ebbery minit. Fust ting he come, he say to ole 'ooman, 'Juno, how my turtle-dove get on? You gib her eat and drink, all proper?' Den I say, 'Yes;' and he tell me, 'Good nigger! I come see her by-an'-bye.'"

"So he is again in the house?" asked the prisoner, with an involuntary sinking of the heart.

"Not in the house 'xactly. He gone out somewhere wid some feller from Orleans. He come here 'fore long, sartin sure."

"Alas, too surely!" thought poor Lola; but she nevertheless did not falter in her determination to make her enemy bite the dust—to pistol him without mercy.

"Yes, yes," she said, "good Juno, I should like some food. Hot coffee and corn-cake. I am hungry and cold."

She wished to be alone for a few minutes to prepare herself, mentally and physically, for the coming terrible ordeal. So soon as the negress had left, she produced the revolver given her by the Englishman, as also a little bag

containing several conical bullets and percussion caps. She had, besides, a powder-flask; such a small affair as to be almost a toy. Nevertheless, she carefully and quickly loaded the empty chambers. This she had often practised, and was now very expert. Scarcely had she finished, when the door again slid back, and old Juno entered, bearing a tray with hot coffee, and milk, and food.

"Dere's a supper! fit for de President's wife, lilly missa. Eat him and drink him." Thus invited, Lola took sparingly of the viands, and poured herself out some coffee. As she drank this, the negress closely and keenly watched her, and an expression of satisfaction came over her wrinkled, ill-favoured features as she saw the girl swallow her hot beverage. No sooner was her cup empty than Juno hastened to fill it.

"I think the coffee has been burned in the roasting," said Lola, making a slightly wry face. "It is bitter."

"Berry good coffee! fust-rate coffee!" said the woman, hastily. "No burned; missa put more sugar, den be all right."

Had Lola caught the expression of her face at that moment she would have been on her guard, and have known that treachery was at work. It was not until she was again pressed urgently to drink more of the coffee that a slight suspicion shot athwart her mind. It did not, however, assume any definite shape, and the negress observing an inquiring look in her eyes—as much as to say, "You are very anxious I should take this coffee"—did not press the subject.

Juno trimmed the oil-lamp and cleared away the things, first asking carelessly whether missa had done with the coffee?

"Done with it? Yes. It has made me quite thirsty. I didn't like it at all. Get me some water, please."

The old woman obeyed, mumbling to herself, as she went, words whose purport Lola could not catch.

"Aha! de little dove, she drink de drink quite kind. I tought she was artful fust; but she no tink nuffin at all de matter. Wonder why she no frighten."

The old crone knew not that Lola's suspicions and fears were lulled to sleep by the security—false security—which the possession of the pistol gave her.

CHAPTER XLI.

DRUGGED AND DISARMED !

THE prisoner in the room, called in irony the dove-cot, had been cold, but scarcely had she taken the second cup of coffee ere a warm glow began to pervade her frame. Her blood seemed to bound through her veins with fresh force, and she felt a tingling sensation over her skin far from unpleasant. Gradually a feeling of languor stole over her, and she felt a calm happiness and contentment, bodily and mental, she had never experienced before.

Seated on the velvet-cushioned ottoman, leaning back against one of the soft pillows, she gave way to the visions of fancy which now arose before her.

Slowly she began to have a dim consciousness that all was not right ; that she was wandering in her mind.

At one moment Hubert Glynne strode before her, and as he knelt at her feet she could hear the music of his well-loved voice—

“Lola—dear Lola ! do not fear ; I am here to save you.”

She awoke from this delusion with a start and a little scream, for over his shoulder she thought she saw the cruel face and gleaming eyes of Hyæna Jones, who stood, knife in hand, ready to plunge it into the breast of Hubert.

“No—no ! spare him !” she cried ; strike me instead !”

And then there suddenly burst upon her the fact that all this was a dream, a vision, a creation of her imagination. She was alone in the mysterious room—the dove-cot.

“Great Heavens ! what can this mean ?” she cried. “Am I going mad ? Is it a fierce fever which now burns in my veins, and conjures up these phantoms. I must not give way. I feel drowsy, but I will not sleep. The pistol ! ah ! it is safe !”

She drew it from its hiding-place, and then put it back again ; still, however, keeping her hand on it.

Spite of herself, the strange feeling she had before experienced again pervaded her. She saw all things as

though through a cloud, and the room became peopled with shadows, who addressed her, and to whom she in return replied.

Again and again she awakened to a consciousness of the truth of her real position by a desperate effort of the will; but again and again the potent drug asserted its sway.

At last she fell back on the ottoman in a state of semi-insensibility. Her eyes were open, and instinctively riveted on the door; but between that and herself was a moving crowd of phantoms—some friends, some enemies.

She saw her brother Sebastian, and her kind friend Miss Maude. Hyæna Jones, and Jabez Hack, too, flitted constantly to and fro like uneasy spirits. Presently, one shape in a cloak, slouched hat, and riding-boots, assumed greater prominence, and stood out more distinctly among the rest. She could no longer see the door now, for it was hidden by a species of cloud. This shape advanced to her, and she recognised Varley Fang.

"Back—back!" she cried; "I want ye not. Fang—Fang!—Varley Fang! Stand back, or Mr. Hubert will kill you! I will kill you, for I am armed—armed—yes! armed!"

"Ha! ha! ha! What, my pretty Lola! are your wits wool-gathering? Has the hot coffee been too strong for you, my plantation beauty?"

The mention of the hot coffee suddenly restored her faculties, and like lightning it flashed across her mind that she had been drugged. By a desperate effort of will, she banished all the phantom shapes which peopled the room. No, not all, for the figure of the man in the cloak, that of Varley Fang, still remained. It advanced towards her, and she, struggling vainly to rise, cried out aloud—

"Back, hideous phantom! Stand back! I fear you not! Your blood be on your head!"

She saw her enemy smile a triumphant smile, and then, as though in obedience to her commands, he moved away, and was soon lost in the cloud-like mist which enveloped the room.

Then there flocked up again the others, floating ceaselessly by.—backwards and forwards, to and fro—apparently without aim or object. She had consciousness now that

she had partaken of some powerful drug. In a measure she retained her consciousness, though her limbs refused to obey her will. She knew where she was, and mingled with the feeling of dreamy languor which pervaded her was one of terror at the expected return of Varley Fang.

Once more she saw his form advance from among the crowd of images her fancy had conjured up. He seemed to stand out bolder—more material and real—than the other creatures of her disordered brain. She saw him come close, stoop over her, and heard his voice—

“Lola, my sweet angel!”

With the words he reached forth his hand, and as it touched her bare shoulder she knew that it was no phantom, but Varley Fang himself in person.

With a cry she half rose on the ottoman; but she found, on attempting to gain her feet, that her limbs refused to obey, and that she was dizzy and incapable of standing. Then her thoughts flew back to the pistol—her last, her only hope. Ah, yes; now was her time; his life was in her hands, and she would not spare him. Rapidly her hand sought her girdle, and summoning all her remaining strength, she drew forth the deadly little weapon. But swifter far than herself the hand of Varley Fang seizes hers, and the revolver is easily removed from her uncertain grasp.

“No—no! Help! Stand back, villain! I will shoot you!”

Alas! but idle words. It is doubtful whether she could have aimed and fired the pistol had it not been so easily taken from her.

Varley Fang laughed a short, triumphant laugh. “And would the pretty little dove use her claws? ‘pon my word, quite a little vixen,” he said, as he examined the pistol, and saw that all the barrels were loaded. “It’s lucky I told old Juno to give her some of that *strong coffee*. She might have put a bullet through me with ease had she all her wits about her. A narrow escape, by Jove! However, I’ll make it all safe now.”

Then he took the pistol, and discharged each barrel, one after the other.

“There, my little beauty, now you can’t do any harm!”

With these words he placed the revolver on a shelf above his head, and turned his attention to his captive.

The imminence of her peril served, for a short time, to recall her wandering faculties.

"Let me go—let me leave this place!" she cried passionately; "I will not stay!"

"Let you go! you will not stay! Ha! ha! ha! little love-bird, you don't suppose I am to let you go, after all the trouble I have had to get you here. No, no, Lola, my angel, you shall stay here till you come to reason, and are glad to remain of your own free will."

"Never! never!"

"Yes, yes, my pet, I tell you, you shall have a fine time of it—you shall be my housekeeper, mistress over all my slaves, and, if you are good and loving, mistress over me. Come, bethink you, Lola, you might do worse"

"Let me go—oh, let me leave this place!" she cried, wringing her hands. "My head, oh, my head, I shall go mad! Accursed villain, you have drugged me!"

"Better language, my pretty Lola, better language, if you please. As to having drugged you—nonsense! I have seen that you should take a little composing medicine, that is all, my angel. Ha! ha! you will sleep beautifully by-and-bye."

With these words of mocking triumph he seated himself by her side, and placed his arm round her waist.

She started away from him with a scream.

"Help, help! oh, heavens! my head. Hubert, save me! Help, help!—ah!"

Her cries did not seem to alarm him, for he only laughed as he again caught her and pulled her down beside him.

"It's no use your screaming, my angel, and though your voice were ten times as loud as it is, and you never tired, no one would pay any attention to your cries, even if you were heard. This is my place, sweet Lola, and there are none here but my people, and my word and will is absolute law here. You, too, Lola, are mine, for you are utterly in my power. Ha! ha! see, you have no strength; I can hold you with one hand; you are weak as a child; your limbs fail you. Cease struggling, then, sweet Lola, since it is in vain."

As he spoke, he proved the truth of his latter words by pulling her towards him with ease with his left arm only. Her face was flushed, her breath came pantingly and thick, while her eyes, the pupils of which were painfully contracted by the narcotic which she had taken, were bloodshot, and she could with difficulty see.

Her brain reeled, she felt faint and giddy, while a terrible drowsiness oppressed her. Still, however, she struggled and battled with the feeling, and just retained a dim consciousness.

"Ha! ha! my pretty Lola, my proud beauty, where now is your haughtiness? What avails you now—your wealthy friends, your fiery spirit, your prudish virtue? Mine! mine! mine!"

He arose, and, clasping her tightly in his arms, kissed her lips and cheeks with feverish ardour.

Her cries and entreaties fell unheeded on his ears. He held her in his arms, and mocked her with all the insolence of successful villainy.

"Mine, Lola, mine at last!"

"No, no! help! help!"

"No help can reach you, Lola, my sweet one. Cease fluttering and struggling, my pretty bird!"

And as he spoke he held her tighter, and laughed in her face—his wicked eyes gleaming with unholy passion.

CHAPTER XLII.

A FRUITLESS SEARCH.

It must not be supposed that no farther efforts were being made by Lola's friends to discover whither she had been carried, and to effect her rescue. Captain George, the Englishman, right well fulfilled the promise he had given to Hubert Glynne the night before the latter fell and was made prisoner.

As the reader knows, after the first unsuccessful search of Varley Fang's house, he by no means despaired of recovering the ex-slave girl.

That Fang had really caused her to be carried off he had good reason to believe, and at once set to work to discover a clue to the carriage into which she had been entrapped on the night of the ball.

It will be remembered that, on the return of the party which, armed with the authority of the powerful secret society of the Fiery Cross, had searched the abode of Varley Fang, one of their number, whose horse had cast a shoe, passed a carriage on the road.

This was no other than the vehicle in which Lola was being conveyed a prisoner to the deserted hut.

Twice her friends passed within a short distance of where she was, and once she saw them as they rode by, and endeavoured to scream out.

So soon as Captain George heard of a one-horse vehicle being met on the road, he judged from the description that it was indeed the one by which Lola had been carried off. Forthwith, accompanied by a few trusty friends, he started off in pursuit. The tactics of the Hyæna and Jabez Hack, however, had been so far successful that he could neither hear nor see anything of them. While Lola's friends were scouring the roads, in order to find and rescue her, she was a prisoner in the deserted hut, and the carriage concealed in the swamp.

Shortly after Hyæna Jones had shot the horse, causing the carriage to be upset, the would-be rescuers galloped down the road, on their return to New Orleans. Of course they could not fail to see the overturned carriage, with the horse, now dead, lying in the shafts.

A careful examination convinced our friend that this was the vehicle he sought; but the state of affairs filled him and all those with him with perplexity.

There was the horse shot—the carriage overturned.

What did it mean?

On looking closely and examining the interior of the carriage, by the aid of small lanterns which some of the party carried, it became obvious that there had been a struggle; for there were torn fragments of dress—the same amber satin in which Lola had looked so beautiful at the ball. Also the lining and cushions were slightly spotted with blood. This had flowed from her shoulder

when the Hyæna had, with cruel wantonness, wounded it with his knife.

All this was bewildering and mysterious in the extreme; nor could any of the party succeed in forming a theory to account for it.

"Anyhow, my friends," said the Englishman, "we'll take the carriage back with us to New Orleans. One of us can harness his horse thereto in place of the dead one, and himself ride inside."

This proposal was adopted, and in a few minutes the cavalcade was again on its way towards the city. Shortly they came to the rough barricade which the Hyæna had thrown up across the road.

Here was fresh material for wonder. What could it mean? Had there been a fight on anything like equal terms?

Speculation was useless, so they pushed on, and shortly after daylight arrived in the city.

After the fatigues of the last twenty-four hours some rest was indispensable, and, arranging to meet altogether at two in the afternoon, each of Lola's intended rescuers retired to take some needful rest.

Captain George, however—sad at heart—first repaired to the house of Maude Glynne.

Though it was so early she did not keep him waiting long, and eagerly asked, when he was shown into her presence—

"Well, sir, what news? Have you discovered anything of my poor unhappy Lola?"

"Alas, no! I have been in the saddle scouring the country round with my brave friends for many hours, but have been unable to track her out."

"You still think that it was by the instrumentality of Varley Fang she was carried off?"

"I am certain of it. I have discovered that the carriage was borrowed by Hyæna Jones—your brother's slave—one of the insurgents in the late rising, and Jabez Hack, Fang's overseer."

"And can you not discover whither they have taken her?"

"No; that is the difficulty. We have found the carriage,

on the road to his house, overturned, and with the horse shot; but this throws no light on the subject at all."

"Oh, heavens! alas, poor Lola! Can nothing be done?"

"The first thing to do is to discover whither she has been carried. When we have ascertained that, there is no fear but we will rescue her."

"Yes, yes; but when?" cried Maude. "My heart bleeds for her, as I think that she is even now in the power of the bad man who carried her off."

"It is very unfortunate," said Captain George, gravely. "I will do all that is in my power, believe me, Miss Glynne. If we are too late to save her, fear not but that we will at least avenge her, for your sake and that of my friend Hubert."

Maude Glynne, scarce able to restrain her tears, bade him adieu; and the Englishman retired to snatch a few hours' sleep.

CHAPTER XLIII.

ON THE RIGHT TRACK AT LAST.

CAPTAIN GEORGE slept soundly, worn out by fatigue and excitement, and it was just two o'clock, the hour of meeting, when he awoke. Hurriedly he dressed himself, buckled on his sword, and sallied out.

Refreshed by the sleep so much needed, his spirits rose to the occasion, and as he strode through New Orleans streets towards the St. Charles, where they were to meet, he said—

"By St. George, I'll find her yet! I have a presentiment that I am destined to succeed, and shall yet find that villain Fang."

If our friend George had overslept himself, there were others who had done so to a still greater extent, and it was full three o'clock ere they all met in the smoking-room of the St. Charles.

"That fellow Fang is in New Orleans," said a young planter, a lieutenant in a Mississippi regiment.

"The deuce he is!" cried Captain George. Did you see him?"

"Yes; in Jackson Square. He turned into Broadbent's store. He seemed as if he'd just come from a journey—booted, spurred, and cloaked."

"Curse him! wherever he came from, there the girl is. I will go and see if I can hear anything of his movements."

So saying, Captain George hurried away, and, walking quickly through the streets, he reached Jackson Square, and was just about turning into Broadbent's dry goods store, when Darby Kelly, the Irishman, ran up to him, breathlessly.

"Ah, yer honour, I've bin lookin' for yez. 'Shure, and the naygur's got some news for ye."

"The nigger! Who—Jupiter?"

"Divil a one else."

"What's it about? Where is he?"

"As to what it's about, it's meself that can't make it out, at all at all. 'Shure he's bin on a visit to a naygur relation on a plantation up river."

"Well, where is he?"

"He's about all town a lookin' fur yer."

"Very well, then; bring him to me."

So saying, Captain George marched into the store.

"Is Mr. Fang here?" he asked of a mulatto clerk.

"Just gone, sah."

"Sorry for that—wanted to see him. Know where he's gone, eh?"

"Well, sah, not exactly; but we're just putting up some baggage for him, and are going to send it down to a sailors' boarding-house."

"To a sailors' boarding-house, eh? What's the nature of the goods he's ordered to be sent—dry goods?" he asked, in an off-hand manner.

("There can be no harm in getting as much information in a general way about this amiable gentleman as possible.")

"Well, yes, sah, most emphatically dry goods, for it's spoiled if it ain't kept dry," replied the clerk, who was inclined to be facetious.

"Oh, indeed! What do you mean?"

"Why, powder, sah—blasting powder; seven kegs of the strongest British-made. Suppose Mr. Fang wants it for some military purpose. Mr. Fang's a very military gentleman, sah—does a good deal with this firm, sah!"

"The devil he does! In what way—military accoutrements and arms, eh?"

"No sah—not exactly, sah—at least, not this time."

"Well, what has my friend Mr. Fang been getting this time, eh?"

"Strong rope, sah—wire rope—sheet-iron, and iron casks, sah."

"What on earth can he want these things for?" asked Captain George, bewildered.

"Don't know for certain, sah! A gentleman with him the other day said something about rafts and torpedoes."

"Oh, I am all in the dark," said George; well, never mind. What is the name of this sailors' boarding-house?"

"Miers', sah, on the Levée—close to the market."

Captain George walked slowly in that direction, pondering greatly on what he had just heard.

"Gunpowder, rafts, and torpedoes," he said to himself, "what can the fellow be after?"

Arrived at the boarding-house, he sauntered in and called for a drink at the bar, for nearly all sailors' lodging-houses in America are also liquor shops.

As he sipped the fiery Bourbon whisky, as it is called, he looked around. There were many sailors standing about drinking, but none he had ever seen before; but ere he had been there five minutes a negro entered whom he recognized as one of the insurgent slaves in the late unsuccessful rising.

"Now, then, you nigger, get out o' the way, do, yer black cuss!" cried a half-drunken sailor, at the same time rudely pushing the unhappy negro on one side as he approached the bar.

For a moment the black man's eye gleamed fiercely, as his hand sought his belt, where he carried a knife. Fortunately for him, however, this motion was not seen, as, had it been, in all probability he would have been set upon and murdered at once, or, after a sham trial, lynched.

The class among the whites known as the "mean whites," that is to say, those who do not own slaves, have ever been the most cruel to, and hated by, the blacks.

The negro instantly stood on one side, but Captain George, who watched him, saw him grind his teeth, and, with eyes fixed on the arrogant white, mutter some words, the purport of which he could not catch. He recognized in the negro, however, one whom the reader will also remember—no other than the ex-chief of the revolt, the redoubtable Sandy-with-the-Hump.

Presently, watching his chance, he again came up to the bar, and addressing the landlord, asked in a low tone—

"Has he come in yet?"

"Come—who?"

"Mr. Fang."

"No; but there's some packages come for him, and they're up in the lumber-room."

"All right; he'll be here by-and-by. I'll wait."

Then the negro sat himself down in a corner of the bar-room, and remained silent and motionless, his keen eye, however, watching the door.

Captain George heard the words, despite the low tone in which they were spoken, and, impressed by the look and demeanour of the nigger, resolved to wait.

However, the time passed, and still Mr. Fang did not come. Sandy-with-the-Hump sat patiently for more than an hour, but then began to wax restless, and presently went to the door, where he stood leaning against the post, glancing anxiously now and again up and down the street.

Vainly Captain George waited for the appearance of Mr. Varley Fang. He had taken his seat in a dark recess of the bar, where he could see without being seen. Hour after hour passed, and evening began to close in. Suddenly he missed the black fellow, Sandy, from the door, and thought it useless to wait longer.

The truth was, that Mr. Varley Fang had had occasion to return to the store, and there learned that a gentleman, whom he soon recognized by the description to be Captain George, had been inquiring for him.

Right well he knew that the Englishman did not want

to see him to pass the compliments of the day. He turned slightly pale as the thought flashed across his mind—

"Can he have discovered that I have now the girl Lola safely secured, though when they searched my house she was not there?"

A little reflection, however, told him that this could scarcely be the case, and he rightly came to the conclusion that the other was attempting to follow him, convinced in his own mind that he was the prime author of the girl's abduction.

Fang was cunning enough to be able to penetrate this design. When he heard that the Englishman had been informed that the goods had been sent for him to the boarding house on the Levée, he carefully kept away, and in place of going himself to see the nigger, Sandy, and give him his instructions on the particular treachery in which he was engaged, he sent to him a messenger, and so our friend Captain George was baffled.

But though the schemer Fang—astute as the serpent—might provide against probable inconveniences, he could not battle against Dame Fortune, who at the eleventh hour apparently took it in her head to befriend the unhappy girl.

Captain George was returning, low-spirited and uneasy, to the hotel, when to him ran up Jupiter, accompanied by an old, white-headed negro, who followed at a slow pace, and with tottering gait.

"Hi! Massa Cap'n, bin a lookin' for you ebberywere. Ba golly, I foun' somethin' out."

"Well, Jupiter, let me hear it; but first, what's it about? as I am in no humour to listen to any idle gossip. If that's your line you may go and prattle to Darby Kelly."

"What's it about? Ba Jumbo! it's about murder, and ebberytting else; dat e're Fang's bin a smashing up all de hull ten commandings!"

"Fang! what of him?"

"He's bin and killed a man, and stole a gal; dis ole nigger, begar, seed him do it."

"Ha! You have something to say, then, about the girl who was mysteriously abducted"

"Dunno wedder she 'ducted or not," the old, whi woolled negro said, speaking with great volubility, "b she run like a rattlesnake, and got clean away from d feller. Oh, my Lor' a mussy, how she did run!—when de coach tumble ober, and he run too, but not like de gal, trough de brake, down de road, and den I see her knock at de door, and walk in."

"Knock at what door? Walk in where? Begin at the beginning, if you've anyt'ing to say, and be quick about it, you old fool!"

Hereupon Jupiter drew himself up proudly.

"Massa Cap'n George," he said, "dat coloured gen'lman ain't a ole fool—his name's Daddy Jonah, an' he's my uncle."

"Well, well! then let your uncle say what he's got to say."

"He'll say it fast enough, if you on'y let him hab his own way. It's nary mossel o' use a-hurryin' him."

Thus advised, Captain George waited as patiently as he could for what the old man had to say.

He was the identical old negro woodcutter who once inhabited the lonely hut where Lola had been taken by her ruffianly captors.

"I wur a goin' up to my ole shanty, massa, to get an iron bar and two or tree pieces of tin leave dere, when I hears a carriage comin'. I hides in de swamp, kinder scared, and wonderin' who be a driving about dat time o' night. Well, I waits, and by'n'by I sees 'em drive from de plank track into de bush, ware dey leaves de carriage, and de two men brings de gal a'tween 'em to de hut."

"What two men—what girl?"

"As to de gal, I dunno—nebber see her afore; but I know'd de two men—one ob 'em war Mr. Fang's driver, and de oder one was a yaller feller—not a good nigger—one of Massa Glynne's hands, and dey call him Hyæna Jones."

"Ha! And the girl?"

"I dunno nuffin' about de gal," said the old negro, stolidly; "but Jupe here sez as she's de one as you're arter, an' her name Lola ——"

"Describe her."

"Can't be did, massa. It war pretty dark; and when dey put her in de hut, she crouch down and hide her face. All I know is as she was 'nation white for a nigger, and had a yaller dress on."

"A yellow dress—'tis she!" exclaimed Captain George; "Miss Glynné told us she was dressed in amber satin."

"Wall, dey takes dis hyar gal into de hut, fastens up de door wid de bery iron bar as I come arter, light a bit o' candle-end, and den—what do you tink dey does?"

"Can't say; go on, for Heaven's sake!"

"Wall, dey begins to play cards for her. It war soon over. Hyæna loses, and den toder one drives him from de hut. Den 'boss' Hack, he has a tussle wid de gal—and mortal well she fou't, too—but jist in de middle ob de scrimmage I sees de Hyæna a creepin' back. He gets close up, pulls out his pistol, and shoots de oder one through a hole in de door. Den he comes in and takes de gal away. Wat you tink's his nex' caper, massa?"

"Can't say—go on, old man, go on, and don't waste time."

The Englishman had great difficulty in controlling his impatience, while the old negro prattled on.

"Wall, he takes her and ties her to a tree, and den off he starts back to de hut to whar de oder feller's lying wounded."

"I shouldn't have thought," put in Captain George, "that the fellow had so much humanity in his nature."

"Yah! yah! yah! 'manity, eh! Wat you tink he do?—why, he talk to him a bit—tell him he come to kill him, an' den he jump on him like a tiger-cat—an', by golly, he do kill him. I see all dis, but durs'n't move—'fraid he kill me too. Wal, what he do nex' 'nough to make one's blood freeze up—nigger as well as white man. He take de dead body by de legs, and drag him into de swamp, all de time singing a cotton 'shanty'—'Ha, ha, rolling John!' He drag de dead man close up to me—I tell you, I mortal skeered—an' den he puts him in a big bush. De moon shines den, an', jus' as he's goin' away, somethin' put in my head to gib him a skeer, too. So up I get from whar I bin hidin' an', jus' as he's clearin' out, I gib him a bit o' de same song. He tinks it's a ghost or

de debbil—an', by golly, how he do run! Wall, den, ~~quack~~ arter dat, I hears bang! bang! bang!—pistol shootin' close by—an' creepin' up I see de gal tied to de tree wid a five-shooter in her hand. Mussy knows whar she got it from, but dere it was, and for a bit he seemed kinder shy o' goin' close. Arter a bit there's anoder tussle, an' somehow—Lord knows how—de gal lets loose, an' away she goes to de carriage, jumps on de box, and drives away, he arter her. Fust she drives towards de town, an' den I hears more banging. Presently, back she comes a whippin' o' de ole hoss like blue blazes, and he arter her. I keeps on as fast as I could behind 'em, an' presently, a long way off, I sees him shoot de hoss an' upset de whole lot. Wall, de gal ain't licked yet, but up she gets, an' runs like a young buffaler skeered by hunters, an' he arter, limpin' though as if he'd been hurt. I goes 'cross de swamp by a cross cut, an' presently sees her goin' along alone by de rails leadin' up to Massa Fang's place. She'd beat him holler an' had no call to run now, so I could jist keep my ole legs agoin' wid her. I sees her go to Massa Fang's, an' push at de door. I seed de door opened, an' in she went. As for de Hyæna, he made tracks back for dis city—see'd him not more nor two hours back along wid Massa Fang."

This was enough for Captain George; he now knew where the girl was, and without wasting time in questioning the old man, or in vain conjecture, he hastened to invent and put in practice measures to rescue the girl Lola, one time slave of Hubert Glynne, now the chosen friend of his sister Maude.

"We may be too late—she is in that villain's power. If he has ill-used her, by the heavens above, I will pistol him wherever I meet him!"

An hour later, and, in company with some five-and-twenty other horsemen, the Englishman was speeuing along the road towards the plantation house of Varley ~~burg~~

CHAPTER XLIV.

A NOVEL MODE OF PICKING A LOCK.

CAPTAIN GEORGE, though a foreigner, and comparatively a stranger to all the young men of the Southern aristocracy, yet seemed to imbue all with his own spirit and determination. He had more than one motive for the zeal he showed in endeavouring to rescue the girl.

In the first place, he had promised his friend Hubert Glynne, than whom he had liked or loved none more on the American Continent, with perhaps the exception of the gallant-hearted, unfortunate Darcy Leigh. Moreover, he admired the beauty of the girl Lola, and pitied her on account of the unremitting persecution of Varley Fang.

The Englishman read this man's character aright, and thoroughly hated him, while he avoided falling into the error of Hubert Glynne, and despising him. He firmly believed that this man Fang was engaged in a deep conspiracy against the Confederate Government, whose cause he had pretended to espouse; the nature of the contemplated treason he could not divine, as he had no sufficient evidence. He was both amazed and grieved at the fact that he could get no one to join him in his just alarms and suspicions. Then, as all through the war, the hot-headed, rashly brave Southerners so despised their foe as to neglect precautions which perilled, and ultimately was a great cause of their failure to establish, their independence.

But our friend Captain George had another very powerful reason for using his best endeavours; Hubert's sister—gentle, affectionate, blue-eyed Maude Glynne—had found favour in his eyes. He admired her, and the more he saw of her the warmer became that feeling. She was undeniably beautiful, and though wanting the dash and splendour usually the attributes of dark beauties, her loveliness was of a retiring, soft, and melting type. In her presence he felt in a haven of rest—as though he could renounce the cares, troubles, and turmoils of this world of busy life, and be content with peace and love in her arms.

He had, however, given no signs—not the slightest—that he experienced any feeling for her beyond ordinary friendship.

She, on her part, was deeply grateful to the handsome Englishman, and liked him the better on account of his nationality and English characteristics. She saw that beneath his quiet manner—sometimes dashed with cynicism—there lay a determined nature; that he was, in every sense of the word, a brave and honourable man. She fancied, and not wrongly, that he had seen care and trouble, and had probably led a rough life. But this was no drawback in her good opinion. Without knowing it, she became gradually and irresistibly attracted towards the stranger; and this affair of the abduction of Lola served to bring them closer together, by establishing a kind of sympathy.

We left Captain George riding at a rapid rate along the road by the fence leading to the estate and house of Varley Fang, in company with some five-and-twenty others, all well mounted and armed, and bent on rescuing the girl Lola from the clutches of Varley Fang.

All were members of the brotherhood of the Fiery Cross; and Fang, by having committed so gross an outrage on this girl, a friend of Maude Glynne, and under the especial protection of Hubert—one of the most popular young planters in Louisiana—had brought himself under their especial ban, and each and every one of them felt towards him as though personally grieved. By the laws of the Order, too, he was liable to summary and condign punishment, and the Englishman swore to himself that if they came too late to save the unhappy girl, he should not escape a heavy retribution for his crime.

Thus animated, like one man, the rescuers—it might be the avengers—rode swiftly on, nor drew rein until the fenced road leading up to the house was reached. By a sort of tacit understanding, the leadership was entrusted to Captain George, and this for more reasons than one. They were mostly young men, and had few of them seen active service in the field, the war at that stage only just penetrating to far-south Louisiana. Then, too, he was the friend of Miss Glynne, and exerted himself energetically in her behalf to rescue her lost friend and at one time slave

So Captain George placed the majority all around the house, in such positions as to render it impossible for any one to escape, and then he himself and two others knocked at the door.

"Who dar?"

It was the voice of old Juno.

"Open the door, or we break it down."

"Who you, talk o' break down door et 'spectable gen'l'man? Dis is Massa Fang's house."

"Open the door!" cried Captain George, more loudly, "in the name of the 'Fiery Cross!' The place is surrounded, and if you do not open at once, we will burst in."

The old negress went to a little window high up, to reach which she had to mount a stool.

The sight she saw filled her with terror. All round so far as she could see she made out a series of figures standing by the side of their horses, silent and motionless. She now glanced on their swords and the barrels of their pistols, and she knew at once that the threat to burst in was not an idle one.

Already the news of the abortive slave-rising, and the founding from that cause of a band of white men known as the "Knights of the Fiery Cross," was a common topic of conversation among the negroes.

Their ignorance and credulity had caused the power and scope of this brotherhood to be greatly exaggerated, and many believed that every white man who was a member had sworn to kill a black man on every possible occasion, even in cold blood, and that those among them who at the end of a year could produce the greatest number of skeleton right hands of slain negroes would be promoted to the highest and most honourable posts.

"Oh! my Lor a mussy—don't kill ole nigger 'ooman. I nebber do no harm, massa white man."

"Open the door!"

"You no kill ole 'ooman!" she cried, in genuine terror.

"Not if you open at once."

"I go get de key. Massa Fang got him in de 'dove-cot.'"

Thus saying, the negress hurried away.

Captain George waited a moment or two, and then decided that it would be better to burst in at once, as the

old woman might be contriving the removal or concealment of the girl or the escape of Varley Fang.

"Come forward, a couple of you who have carbines, and burst this door in."

But it became obvious almost at once that it was too strong to be battered down by light carbines, and it became necessary to devise some other means.

"This is awkward," said one of the men, who had vainly tried to produce an effect on the door; "we had better force an entrance somewhere else; this door is evidently too strong."

"Stand on one side: I can pick this—leastwise, me and my mare 'Dinah' between us!" cried a young man, a Mississippi planter from over the river.

"Can your mare pick locks?"

"She can open doors, anyhow."

"Blaze away!"

The young fellow called the mare by name, and she trotted up to the door after him as docile as a spaniel. He had ridden her in many a buffalo hunt on the vast plains of Texas, and more than once owed his life to her speed and sagacity.

"Now, then, old girl, wheel your stern round," and as he spoke he took her by the bridle, and placed her with her tail to the door.

"Lash out, Dinah, my beauty."

A light touch on the shoulders caused the mare to lay back her ears and let fly with her heels at the door in rare style.

Slap! slap! bang! bang!

At each volley of her iron-shod heels portions of the woodwork gave way, till in less than half a minute the strong door was so completely shattered as to give ready ingress.

Without wasting further time, Captain George, followed by some half-dozen, entered the house.

"Keep good watch, you fellows outside," he cried, pausing for a moment on the threshold; "our man's as cunning as the devil."

Looking round the room, he at once saw that there were two staircases leading from the ground-floor room, which was a sort of entrance hall.

The old negress now came shuffling down, crying---

"Massa Fang be here directly : he comin'."

"Wherever he is the girl is," thought our friend, and at once, pushing the old woman on one side, he ran up the stairs, followed by several others.

But in thinking to capture the wolf in his lair, perhaps with the lamb in his clutches, they were mistaken.

CHAPTER XLV

CAPTAIN GEORGE IS BAFFLED AGAIN.

VARLEY FANG, when alarmed by the outcry of the old woman at the door of the "dove-cot," placed Lola, now all but insensible, on the cushioned ottoman, and went to see what was the matter.

"The house surrounded by armed men !" he exclaimed.

"Yes, massa ; and dey say dey bust de door open ; and dere dey goes !"

Surely enough, he heard plainly the banging of the firelocks against the door.

He turned a shade paler, and stood for a moment in silent thought, his eyes resting meanwhile on his *intended* victim, as she lay moaning and muttering to herself on the couch.

"Ah !" he said, "I must face them. They cannot break in all at once, but in time, of course, they will succeed. As for the girl, she is safe enough, I think. I wish, though, she did not mutter and moan so. Pity she didn't take a little more of the physic. Why didn't you give her another dose, Juno ?"

"Couldn't, massa. I mix him putty strong, an' she taste him, and say him coffee nasty. S'pose I gib her more, she sure to ha' foun' out."

"Ah ! ah ! it's all safe ; the walls are thick, and it is impossible they can hear her muttering. Now, go and tell them, Juno, that I will come down in a few minutes. There's no hurry ; the door will stand."

The old woman hastened away, and Fang, confident in the strength of his door advanced towards the half insen-

sible captive, and looking down on her, with cynical triumph depicted in his face, uttered half aloud, "This abortive attempt on their part will but render my victory more sweet. They may search the house many times, and never discover this narrow room; so Lola, sweet Lola, proud Lola, you are indeed mine!"

Bang!—bang!—crash!—crash!—splinter!—slap!

Varley Fang started. "What in the devil's name is that?" he cried. And as he listened, he knew by the sound that the door was being dashed to pieces. "Curse their breaking in!" he said to himself, and hurried away to meet the intruders, just as the mare's heels completely demolished the door.

He had scarcely closed the door of the villanous chamber he had with cruel mockery named the "dove-cot," than he heard the tramp of feet approaching; and as he emerged into the room adjoining, he found himself confronted with Captain George and some half-dozen of those with him.

"What is your will, gentlemen? What is the meaning of this renewed outrage? Is it not enough that you intruded before, and ransacked my place, as though I were an enemy? By what authority do you thus act?"

"By the authority of the council of the Fiery Cross, of which honourable society you, Varley Fang, are a recreant member."

"What do you want? What is your object?" he asked next, though all the time he well knew.

"You have here concealed, imprisoned, a young lady, Dolora Velasco by name; one time known as Lola, living under the protection of Miss Maude Glynne, from whom she was treacherously kidnapped."

Varley Fang, shrugging his shoulders, replied, "You have the power, though not the right, to do as you please. Search my house a second time, and see for yourselves."

"We will," said Captain George, quietly, "and depend upon it we shall not leave until we find the girl."

Varley Fang smiled with affected carelessness, and seated himself on a table. "Go in, sir—go in," he said. "You act on the maxim that might is right, I suppose. I defy you!"

Without taking any further notice of him, Captain

George commenced a strict search from top to bottom. From the ground floor to the very roof, the house was explored.

Varley Fang meanwhile remained seated, a scornful smile on his features, as though well assured that all their efforts would be vain.

Captain George ransacked the whole place, breaking open cupboards, overthrowing furniture, altogether reckless of the feelings of the master of the house.

Varley heard the noise and uproar as the searchers burst rudely from room to room; but though his heart burned with rage, he still wore on his face the same self-satisfied, contemptuous smile.

A quarter of an hour passed on, and one by one the searchers came back, unsuccessful—discomfited.

Captain George returned to the room hot and dusty from the work in which he had been engaged. Though he had explored, as he thought, every nook and corner of the building, he had discovered no trace of her whom he sought. In his own mind he felt satisfied that Fang knew where she was, and had besides, he thought, abundant evidence to justify him in taking any measures he thought fit.

So, after taking a few turns up and down the room, he halted suddenly, and faced Mr. Varley Fang, who sat with legs crossed and one arm carelessly resting on the table.

"Now, look here, my fine fellow," he said, "I know full well that she whom we seek is here."

"Indeed?"

"You may pretend indifference, and assume an air of bravado, but it will not avail you. I shall not leave here until I find out where the girl is whom we seek."

"Then you are likely to remain a pretty long time, mister," said Fang, with a harsh laugh. "The girl is not here, I tell you. I know nothing about her and defy you to find her."

"If she is not here, where is she?"

"How should I know?"

"She was seen to enter here last night or early this morning."

Fang looked surprised and asked sharply, "Who saw her?"

"No matter; she was seen—that is sufficient. Refuse to say where she is at your peril."

"Varley Fang folded his arms, while a look of stolid obstinacy came over his face. "I don't know anything about her," he said; "and if I did, I wouldn't speak. So do your best and your worst, you and your lawless crew."

Captain George thought for a moment or two, and then resolved to put his courage to the test. Producing his revolver, he examined the charges and deliberately cocked it. "Now, Varley Fang," he said, "I give you five minutes to consider. If you still choose to remain obstinate, your blood be on your head."

"You may make it five seconds, if you like," was the defiant reply. "If you mean to commit murder as well as burglary, I am at your mercy, as you well know."

"Not murder, but execution on a criminal. I know that you are guilty. I know you as the villain you are."

"Your abuse is worthy of you and your nation. Cringing and cowardly to the strong, bullying to the weak and powerless; and that powerless I am, witness the gang you have with you."

The Englishman said nothing, though the crimson flush on his cheek told that he felt the taunt.

"You have only four minutes to decide, Mr. Varley Fang."

"Which means that in four minutes you intend to become a murderer,—to kill me in cold blood."

Captain George made no reply, but leaning against the wall, steadily regarded him. There was a solemn silence. The neighing of the horses without, even the sighing of the wind amongst the trees, could be plainly heard. One minute, two minutes, three minutes, four minutes, passed. Fang still sat in the same position; the Englishman still stood leaning against the wall, pale, determined-looking, lips compressed, pistol in hand, ready at any moment to carry out his threat.

He closely watched the countenance of Varley Fang, and believed that the latter had fully made up his mind to brave

it out. Farley Fang did not think that he would carry his threat into execution.

Now arose the question in the mind of the Englishman—Should he do it? should he shoot him in cold blood? Not one of his companions spoke a word against his proposed intention; they stood silent and motionless as himself, and he knew that were he to pistol Fang as he sat, no voice would be raised against the act.

But a voice within him ceaselessly spoke, and his soul revolted at the thought of shooting a fellow-man in cold blood.

Probably Fang desisted this by his countenance, or he would not have worn so bold a front.

Suddenly Captain George started; he was leaning against the wall, which was of wood, though covered with plaster and paper; he thought he heard a muffled sound as of some one talking, and approaching his ear closer, he distinctly caught a sharp cry, and then the noise of a crash and fall. While he listened, his eyes were on Varley Fang, and he knew by a sudden start and a look which came over his face that he, too, had heard it.

"Which is the door to that room?" he said sternly, and pointing behind him; "I mean the room through here!" and as he spoke, he struck the wall with his hand.

"There is no room there," was the surly reply.

"We will see to that," said Captain George; "our former search, I fancy, was a careless one. Look to him, some of you fellows!"

Then, taking a lamp from the table, he carefully noted the position of the wall, and proceeded to search the room which lay behind. But when he gained this there was nothing for his pains.

The old woman June and two nigger wenches were in this room, which he was quite convinced must be the one which lay behind the wall through which he had heard the cry.

"Did any of you women call out just now?" he asked, looking around with something like dismay.

"Call out, massa? what for call out?"

"Did any one of you scream just now?"

"Yes, massa," said old Juno, "Sophy gub a squeak when Dido stick a pin in her."

"Confound you!" said Captain George, angrily; "that, then, was the cry I heard." Still, however, he did not give up without another search, as vigorous and as fruitless as the first. At last, in spite of a feeling to the contrary, he felt compelled to acknowledge that the girl could not be in the house; and after a brief consultation with his comrades, the conclusion was reluctantly arrived at that no more could be done, and that they must return, baffled and unsuccessful.

* * * * *

Varley Fang laughed a harsh laugh of triumph—a discordant laugh, like the screech of an owl.

"Ha! ha! ha! fortune favours me. It is well I carried it off with a bold front. The consummate fools! That English hound, too, was within half-a-dozen feet of the girl the whole time."

He listened, and waited till the sound of the horses' hoofs, as the searchers rode off, died away, and then, taking the lamp from the table, went once more to the door of the hidden chamber—unlocked it—entered, and was again alone with his beautiful captive.

Again the unhappy girl, now in a heavy slumber, was in his power, after having been on the very verge of deliverance, with friends actually within a few feet of her—once more in his power, utterly and completely.

CHAPTER XLVI

VARLEY FANG OUTWITTED.

LOLA lay, physically unbound—her limbs free and unconfined by rope or strap; but, mentally, she was fettered indeed—helpless, powerless as an infant. She yet, however, retained a partial consciousness, and continued muttering and raving amidst the delirium into which the drug had thrown her. It was a cry louder than usual, which broke from her when her limbs refused their office, and she fell on attempting to gain the door, which had attracted the

attention of Captain George. This was a last expiring effort, and now she was fast approaching a state of complete insensibility.

Varley Fang deliberately surveyed his unhappy prisoner—now, indeed, wholly in his power—and, placing the lamp down, closed the door and bent over her, his eyes and face full of wicked triumph.

“Ah! Lola, my pretty bird, at last you are completely in my power. The difficulty and danger I have encountered and surmounted but enhances the value of my victory.”

He spoke unconsciously aloud. Suddenly, and as he was speaking, to his horror and amazement he hears the door thrown open—a hand is laid on his collar, and a voice, to him terrible in its threatening tone, rings in his ears—

“At last, Mr. Varley Fang—liar, scoundrel, kidnapper of young girls, and renegade!—I have you! discovered, foiled, caught red-handed—ha! ha! You thought I had gone away, did you?”

Starting back, the baffled villain beheld the Englishman, Captain George. With his left hand he tightly grasped his collar, while in his right he held a pistol, whose deadly barrel was levelled full upon him.

A slight pressure on the trigger, and a bullet would quickly end his earthly career. This he well knew, and also that he was powerless, and had no chance of present escape.

The grasp in which the Englishman held him was one of iron, and, as if to test his own strength, and prove to Fang his impotence, he shook him as a terrier would a rat.

Still the Englishman was alone, and Varley, who quickly realized the situation, thought that an opportunity might arise that he might yet turn the tables. But the next words of Captain George carried dismay to his heart; and he knew that he had been hopelessly outwitted in this desperate game.

“I am now going to fire my pistol, Mr. Varley Fang——”

“What, you would murder me!” the villain cried, turning pale.

"In your case I thoroughly believe that killing would be no murder; but at present I shall not kill you, unless you compel me to do so. I shall release your collar; at your peril refuse to obey me; or make any, the slightest attempt at resistance or escape, and I pledge the word of an Englishman I will remorselessly shoot you down."

The next moment the hand was taken from Fang's shoulder and he was free.

"Now, open your cloak, sir, that I may be assured you are not armed."

Fang dared not refuse; and the Englishman, by a searching glance, assured himself that he had neither knife nor revolver.

"Take off your cloak, and let it fall on the ground."

This, too, was done.

"Place your arms by your side, at the word of command, and stand at attention. Remember, if you refuse to obey orders, I will shoot you. ATTENTION!"

Fang, inwardly cursing and swearing, yet nevertheless was constrained to obey, and the next moment he stood like a private soldier before his colonel.

"Now then, sir, I am about to give the order for you—to go to the other end of this room. Right-about-face, quick MARCH!"

Captain George's pistol was still levelled threateningly at him, and Fang well knew it would be as much as his life was worth to refuse.

When he got to the other end, the other again gave the order—"Right-about-face," and he was compelled to stand in the attitude of attention.

The reason for this was sufficiently obvious. While the involuntary soldier stood at his officer's orders in the position of attention—his hands open and straight down by his side—he was, of course, powerless for mischief; and should he move his hands ever so slightly, it would be at once observed.

The scene was a strange one—the room dimly lighted by the lamp; the girl Lola lying in a state of almost complete insensibility on the sofa; at the other end of the room Fang, standing, deadly pale, a cold perspiration bedewing his face—which was absolutely demoniacal in

expression—rage, hatred, fear, and shame asserting the mastery.

Captain George stood for some little time quietly regarding his prisoner.

"Now I am going to have a little ball practice, Mr Fang," he said, quietly. "I am going to put a pistol bullet in the plank next to your head—you'd better stand still, I can tell you."

There was so much grim earnestness in the manner and tone of our friend, that Mr. Varley Fang wisely resolved to do as he was told.

Quietly and slowly raising his pistol hand, Captain George took deliberate aim. The other stood, and, by the lamp-light which fell full on the deadly barrel, he saw that it was full on his head; he could see down the spiteful little iron tube, and as he remembered that a slight pressure of the trigger would speed a bullet through his brains, his heart quailed.

Would he do it?

Was he about to be slain thus ruthlessly? Would it not be better to make a rush and fight for his life?

But he was at the other's mercy!

These were the thoughts which rapidly passed through the mind of Varley Fang.

The perspiration which stood out on his forehead now rolled down on to his face in great drops.

The Englishman seemed to mock his agony and terror, as he had before mocked and triumphed over poor, helpless Lola.

The master of the situation stood, with a quiet smile on his face, unmoved—determined-looking.

The suspense was horrible, almost past bearing, and in a few seconds more Varley must have fallen to the ground—screamed aloud, rushed on his implacable conqueror, or done something—so terrible was the mortal agony he endured in those few moments. But just as the limit was reached, it seemed as though his inmost thoughts and feelings were read. The Englishman spoke—

"Now, look out! stand still, or by accident—a happy accident, it may be—my bullet may miss its mark, and go through your villainous skull before the plank."

Crack

Instantly Varley heard the sharp hiss of a bullet pass his right ear—so close, he fancied he could feel the wind of it. Involuntarily, he dodged on one side.

"Ha! ha! you craven fool," laughed Captain George; "what's the use of your dodging when it's all over? Now stand still next time. I shan't tell you on which side of your head I'm going to plant my bullet; so if you happen to miscalculate, you may dodge right in its way; and my experience of bullets enables me to say confidently that such a course would not be advisable."

Like a cat playing with a mouse, Captain George amused himself, as it appeared, at the expense of the unhappy culprit—caught, as it were, *in flagrante delicto*. But it was not altogether from cruelty, and with a desire to alarm the man, that he fired the pistol.

The firing of two barrels of his pistol was a pre-arranged signal, on hearing which his comrades (who had hidden away in order to mislead) were to return in all haste.

Captain George, when the apparently useless search was given up, did not really intend to leave the owner of the house free to his own devices. He had a shrewd suspicion, which amounted to something almost stronger, that there was something behind. He had caught a hasty glance exchanged between the old woman and her master, and, instantly connecting this in his mind with the suppressed scream he had heard, felt certain that there was something else to be discovered.

So, watching his opportunity, he concealed himself in a large clothes-press at the head of the stairs.

"Ride off," he said to the nearest one to him, "as if you had finally given up the hunt; but halt a hundred yards or so away. I will wait and watch, and listen. Then, when you hear me fire my revolver, ride back and come to my assistance. If the house is barricaded, break in instantly, for I may have odds to contend with, and be in imminent danger."

This was his plan, and how successfully he carried it out is sufficiently apparent by the present position of affairs.

Captain George had fired his pistol once, and while he

waited he could hear the clatter of horses' hoofs approaching, and so knew that his signal had been heard.

So soon as he was assured of this fact he continued his little game with Mr. Fang. Fully assured that he deserved any punishment, even the most severe, he had no scruple in putting him in intense bodily fear.

"Now, Mr. Fang, steady's the word—steady! I'm going to shoot within an inch of your right ear.

Instinctively, the victim dodged his head to the left an inch or two.

"No, no; not so fast; let me complete my sentence—within an inch of your right ear, *or your left*—I haven't made up my mind which, yet. If you make a guess, and dodge the wrong way, it's all up with you, my fine fellow."

A few moments longer he kept his victim in suspense, and then once more is heard the sharp crack of the pistol.

A cry of pain breaks forth from Varley Fang. The bullet grazes his left ear, and cuts away a piece of skin from the lobe.

"You shouldn't have dodged, my good man. Always take good advice; and, in a case of this kind, don't give way to nervousness. Now, if you had flinched another inch or two, it would have been bad for you."

"If you mean to murder me," Fang said, in hoarse, trembling tones, "do so at once, in the name of the devil! This is unbearable."

"Murder you, my fine fellow!" was the cool reply—"execute you, you mean! No, I shall not perform that office, if I can help it—that appertains to the hangman. And as to invoking your friend, the devil (though I grant there is no one else from whom you could ever hope for aid), I expect you have even tired out his patience by your shuffling tricks; dare say you've disgusted him, the only friend you ever could have counted on."

Thus our friend tormented and terrified his captive; nor had he the least remorse or compunction in so doing. When he thought of the unhappy girl lying, as he shrewdly guessed, drugged, and all but insensible, close by, his blood boiled with rage, and he could scarce refrain from himself assuming the office of executioner.

But now is heard a tumult without, quickly followed by the discordant sounds of old Juno's voice.

"Massa Fang, Massa Fang! they's come back, and is a-bustin' in agin'."

She knew not what had happened, and started back aghast on seeing our friend standing with pistol still threateningly levelled at her master's head.

"Stand back, old woman," cried Captain George, glancing over his shoulder. "Stand back, and hold your noise. This man is my prisoner, and if you move, or attempt to assist him, I will first shoot him, and then hang you!"

There was no need to fear any attempt at rescue on her part. She was utterly affrighted at the state of affairs, and rushed hastily away, only to meet, thronging up the stairs, the companions of the now triumphant Englishman.

Shouts made the walls of the place echo again.

"Where are you? The Fiery Cross to the rescue! Hurrah for the Fiery Cross!"

The old negress screamed, and the male niggers below set up a pitiful wailing, they scarce knew why.

Amidst all this uproar the leading ones of the party found their way to the secret room—the "dove-cot"—guided by the light which shone through the open door.

Captain George, who till now had kept his pistol levelled on Varley Fang, now lowered his arm.

"Villain! you are at last caught in the toils, and shall pay a heavy reckoning for your crime. Resistance is useless—escape hopeless. So submit to your fate, and await the sentence which the honourable Order, the Fiery Cross, whose roll you disgrace, may pronounce."

As his comrades passed into the room, the Englishman advanced to the side of the couch, in order to see how it fared with the girl.

"Bring water—where's Burford? He's a doctor—quick, some of you. I believe the girl is dying."

While some had gone for water, and another to fetch Surgeon Burford, Captain George turned to Varley Fang.

"You scoundrel!" he said, "this girl is quite insensible; you have drugged her. If she dies from the effect of the poison, you, too, shall follow her. She shall not be long

at the judgment-seat alone. I'll take care the court is not kept waiting for the prisoner."

Varley Fang was silent. He knew now that he was indeed utterly and irretrievably caught in the toils, as his bitter enemy had said.

In a very short time Surgeon Burford entered, and, after a brief examination of the insensible Lola, at once pronounced that she was suffering from the administration of a narcotic poison.

"What have you given her, you dog?" cried Captain George, when he learned that it would render the doctor's task easier, if he knew what particular drug had been administered.

At first Fang seemed inclined to be obstinate, and denied that he had given her any drug.

"She's only drunk," he said, with sullen insolence.

"You lie, you ruffian! Answer me, or down you go."

"If she's taken anything, it must have been henbane."

He was utterly wild, now; but there gleamed in his eye a smouldering fire which might have taught a close observer he had not given up all hope.

Water was dashed on the now unconscious Lola, and when the surgeon knew what drug she had taken he was able to prescribe something by way of antidote.

This had to be poured between her teeth, for, even in her deep and unnatural sleep, she struggled desperately—moans and broken mutterings escaping her the while.

"How is it, doctor?" asked Captain George, anxiously, after she had been for some minutes under the surgeon's care.

"Oh, she'll come round. Already the dashing of the cold water on her face has produced an effect. She will be able to swallow presently, and then I shall be able to give her a good dose."

"There's no danger for her life, I hope?"

"I think not. The pupils of the eyes are contracted, but not so much so as I have seen in other cases. No; whoever dosed her knew what he was doing—gave just enough to produce deep sleep, preceded by delirium."

"Ah! a cold, calculating scoundrel. That reminds me—I will see that he is handcuffed and placed in safe custody

Here, some of you fellows, who has got the irons among you? Ha!"

To his utter astonishment, Varley Fang had disappeared. One glance revealed to Captain George the way in which he had escaped. There was, as the reader knows, a door at each end of this long, narrow room. The Englishman had thought there was only one.

Varley Fang had watched his opportunity, and when the attention of all, especially of him who had so signally discomfited him, was concentrated on the girl, he quietly and skilfully touched the spring, the door flew back, and it may be readily believed he hastened to avail himself of the chance. The open door revealed which way he had gone. Without a moment's delay, the Englishman dashed on in pursuit, shouting—

"Follow me, some of you! We must not let this fellow escape."

But though his intentions to recapture the runaway were good, he found it was a task impossible to accomplish. Varley knew every turning in the house, and in a few minutes it was apparent that he had escaped. The moon was now obscured, and, as no signs could be discovered of the criminal, it was judged useless to wander about in the darkness.

Sentries were posted, however, at every door and window, so that if he should be lying concealed within, it would be impossible for him to escape.

In the course of an hour or so, the girl Lola was sufficiently recovered to speak, and shortly, ere the dawn broke, a carriage of her preserver's was waiting at the door to convey her back, safe and unharmed, to the city whence she had been kidnapped.

"Boys," said Captain George, after he had seen the girl placed in the carriage, "we've lost the wolf—anyhow, we can burn down the accursed den. There's a pile of faggots yonder; heap 'em up all round, and we'll make a bonfire of Mr. Varley Fang's house."

In a very short space of time this was done, and ere the grey light of morning appeared, all that remained of the building was a heap of smoking ruins.

Lola was safely conveyed to New Orleans, escorted by

her rescuers, and thus ended the abortive attempt of the villain Fang to possess himself of Hubert Glynne's beautiful slave

CHAPTER XLVII.

FREEDOM FOR THE SLAVE.

THE first intimation Maude Glynne had of the rescue of her friend and one time handmaiden, Lola, was the appearance of that ill-used, but courageous, and, despite her perils and hardships, ultimately fortunate girl, in person before her.

Captain George led Lola by the hand, and presented her to the young lady, his whole face beaming with just pride.

He had promised to rescue her or to avenge her, and right well had he kept his word.

Hubert's sister was not one to stand upon conventionalities, and at once greeted Lola with a warm and sisterly embrace.

"Dear, dear Lola, I am so glad to see you again! Thank Heaven, you have been torn from the grasp of the villains who abducted you, and restored to me!"

"I do, indeed, thank Heaven, Miss Maude; but I must not forget this gentleman, to whom I, under the blessing of Providence, owe my deliverance."

"Ah, sir!" cried Maude, approaching Captain George, "how can I ever thank you—ever hope to repay you for the gallant service you have done me? In the name of Lola and myself, accept my sincere and heartfelt thanks. Would that I had aught else to offer which you would deign to accept!"

The Englishman looked her full in the face, not with a rude, offensive stare, but with respectful admiration.

She blushed up to the temples, and turned away her head.

Captain George, gallantly falling on one knee, took her hand, and, without resistance on her part, imprinted a kiss thereon.

"Miss Glynne," he said, in tones of deep feeling, "I am more than repaid—the consciousness of having done you a service is a sufficient reward."

"Ah! sir," she said, with a flutter at her heart, which also affected her speech, "you are flattering me. You Englishmen, bred in the atmosphere of monarchical courts, look down pityingly on us American girls."

Captain George, remembering his chequered and eventful career, could not help smiling at the notion of his being bred in the atmosphere of courts.

"Nay, Miss Glynne," he said, rising from his knee, "you do me too much honour. So far from being fresh from the atmosphere of courts, my life has been a wild and adventurous one—that of a mere soldier of fortune."

"And a right noble and gallant one too, sir," she exclaimed, her eyes flashing and cheeks reddening. "Were all the sons of the South like you, there would be no fear for the establishment of our independence."

"The Confederate States will achieve their independence, Miss Glynne, if they are steadfast to themselves—if they see and provide against the one rock a-head—a rock which may shatter to pieces the yet young vessel of state."

"And what is that?"

"Slavery."

"Aye," cried Lola, enthusiastically, "You are right. Let them but once determine to meet this difficulty boldly and justly, and all will go well. Enemies will be disarmed, friends drawn closer, a powerful weapon dashed from the hands of the Northern fanatics. Foreign nations will no longer withhold their recognition, as they have not sympathy, and their admiration of Southern bravery. The negro, freed from his chains, will gladly fight for his master, whom he does not hate, against the Yankees, who despise him, and whom he does hate. Let there be a motto emblazoned on the banners of the young Confederacy which shall carry them on to victory in the field and final triumph. Let your watch-cry consist in the soul-stirring words—*'Freedom for the slave!'*"

Lola looked grandly prophetic, standing with flashing eyes, face beaming with excitement, and outstretched arm,

as she gave vent to this stirring appeal—one which sent a thrill through each of her hearers.

“Aye,” cried Captain George, catching her enthusiasm, “freedom for the slave!”

“Yes,” said Maude Glynne, sadly, “freedom for the slave; that should indeed be the word; but it is a cry which I fear will never be shouted heart and soul by my proud and haughty countrymen—least of all, at such a time as this. They hate and despise the Yankees so bitterly, that the very fact of abolitionism being of Northern growth would for ever preclude its being popular. They are brave and self-reliant; confident in their ability to whip the Yankees on the battle-field. Slavery has grown with their growth, and least of all will they agree to renounce it at the bidding of those whom in all creation they hate most.”

“I fear there is too much truth in what you say, Miss Glynne. From what I have seen of the brave and reckless Southerners they will fight out the fight, and shed their blood like water on many a battle-field. Nevertheless, the opinion of the majority of the civilized world, and of my own country in particular, must and will have weight; the vast numbers of the Yankees, fed by a constant stream of emigration, must in time tell, and just when the Confederacy will need every possible aid and sympathy, when every man who can fight or work in the trenches would be worth his weight in silver—at that time the young nation will find herself blocked out from the sympathy of the world—a vast population of slaves, whom they will not free, and dare not put in battle array while slaves, a dead weight on the resources of the country. The watch-cry ‘Freedom for the slave!’ would cause to start up, as though from the earth, a million of freed black men, willing to do battle for the ‘ole massa.’”

“You paint a gloomy picture, sir,” said Maude Glynne, more sadly, “and one which has much truth. Nevertheless, it is but a fancy sketch. I, who know my countrymen, feel assured that it can never be. The Southerners will go into battle and fall by thousands, to the cry of ‘Death or independence!’ but never to that of ‘Freedom for the slave!’”

CHAPTER XLVIII

NEWS OF HUBERT GLYNN

A few days later there came a letter from Hubert Glynn—a letter which, though it brought consolation in that it told he was alive, yet was full of sadness. He was a prisoner and wounded, and hitherto had been refused his parole:—

“Washington, District of Columbia.

“Dear Sister Maude,—You will be sorry to see this letter is dated from the enemy’s capital, where I am a prisoner. I was wounded on our retreat from the glorious battle-field of Shiloh, made prisoner, and at once sent North. I have little hopes of being paroled, and scarce dare expect my liberty before the next exchange of prisoners. Heaven only knows when that may be! It is useless your sending provisions or money to me, as I should never receive either. I heard the other day an astounding rumour as to our brother Launcelot. As it came from a Yankee source I put little faith in it, and so will not here repeat it. Despite of all word-twisting and despatch writing, I hear every day of the success of our arms. The Yankees here are furious at their late defeats, and actually boast of the capture of New Orleans, which they think they are certain to effect. I need scarcely tell you or our Southern friends that it is pure brag on their part. If we were as sure of winning as their fleet now in the Mississippi is sure to be easily repulsed if they dare to attack our river stronghold, our success would be certain indeed. I am anxious to hear of all friends, more especially those brave comrades in arms who fought with me at Shiloh. I wonder where is now the gallant Englishman, Captain George. He fought like a tiger, but was throughout as cool as a cucumber. To him our victory at Shiloh is partly due, for at a critical moment he, with a few men, seized two light guns and turned them on the enemy, who were seeking to drive us from a fort we had captured. I trust he has met with better fortune than myself, and has escaped the casualties of war. I have

received permission to send this letter, but it will be opened and read, so I cannot say all I would. I am very anxious about the girl, Lola. My heart misgives me, as I fear she is in danger. At one time I made light of the warnings I received on the subject, but, now that I have leisure for thought, I feel that the suspicions of our friend the Englishman were not altogether unfounded. I reproach myself greatly for my ingratitude to her. After the great service she did me and mine, I should have seen her safe through everything. Pray look after her, and take care that she wants nothing. When her free papers are signed let her have as much money as you can spare, and, if she wishes it, put her in the way of coming North. With her good appearance and education she can certainly take a good position; and that she wants not the means it is our duty—my duty especially—to see. But for her, a terrible massacre might have occurred, and when I remember that affection for me and yourself, her master and mistress, prompted her to give the timely warning, my heart swells with gratitude. I will not write any more at present. The instant my exchange is effected I will hasten to rejoin you. Kind remembrances to all friends.

* Hurrah for the bonnie blue flag !

“ Your affectionate brother,

“ HUBERT GLYNNE.

“ P.S.—I expect the Yankees will cross out that last sentence. They are not quite so bounceable to-day, so I imagine there is good news for our side.”

Maude Glynne read the whole of this epistle aloud to Lola, who listened with breathless interest, and with varied emotions. Her cheek paled and flushed alternately as Miss Glynne came to that part of the letter where she was so pointedly spoken of. Her heart beat tumultuously when the reader came to that part where she was instructed to see that Lola wanted for nothing—to give her money, and put her in the way of getting North.

“ Ah ! ” she said to herself, clasping her hands, while a thrill of joy pervaded her whole frame, “ he has not forgotten me !—a wounded prisoner in the hands of his enemies. He can yet think of the poor slave girl whom his

bounty has raised to an equality with Miss Maude. He can, amidst his own pain and suffering, bestow a thought on me. Ah! noble heart! Were all Southern masters such as he, I, for one, would almost be content to remain a slave—his slave!—'twould not be slavery; my reason may urge it is, but my heart gives it the lie."

All this she said to herself; but shortly after Maude had finished reading the letter, Lola spoke aloud—

"Miss Maude," she said, "I will do as your brother wishes, and go North."

"What, and leave me, Lola?" said Miss Glynne, with a slight accent of reproach.

"Miss Maude, when I tell you my object you will not seek to dissuade me. Mr. Hubert is wounded and a prisoner; I will hasten to Washington, to tend him and watch over him, and guard him—aye, that I will," she cried, her voice trembling with emotion; "tend him as a mother might a sick infant."

"You will do that, Lola! You will go to him, my poor wounded Hubert, and comfort him in his captivity? Ah! then you are indeed my sister; and far be it from me to bid you stay."

Now that she had learned that her late master—her master still, legally, for all the necessary formalities had not been gone through—had remembered her amidst his own misfortune—now that she had heard his own words read out by his sister, and could clasp the glad assurance to her heart that he had not forgotten her—now, it seemed as though her whole nature was altered. A great change came over her manner, demeanour—her very appearance. She was no longer shrinking, timid, and, as it were, broken in spirit by her late perilous adventure. She no longer shrank from sight and avoided all company, even that of the main agent in her deliverance, Captain George. This, though only a natural effect of the turmoil, excitement, and ill-usage she had passed through, was a source of anxiety to Maude Glynne, and the kind-hearted young lady sought by every means in her power to amuse Lola, and divert her from brooding over the past, looking gloomily to the future.

It seemed as if, though she had come triumphantly through the terrible ordeal, her spirits, her energies, bodily

and mental, had been strained to such a pitch as to inflict permanent injury.

But this letter acted like a talisman.

Gone were the lassitude, indifference, and melancholy, which all Maude's tender solicitude could not efface; and in place thereof—once more—Lola, the high-spirited young lady, Queen of Beauty of the ball—again broke forth.

Proud in her resolve, she seemed to enter on a new life. Hubert Glynne, her master—her chivalric, passionate master—wrong-headed but ever generous, *he* now occupied all her thoughts.

He was weak, wounded, and miserable.

She would fly to him, and render such aid as lay in her power.

In two days from the time of the receipt of the letter she left New Orleans,—a pass to the North having been procured, not, however, without some trouble. It is not necessary to follow her in her journey. Suffice it to say that she was escorted a part of the way by Captain George and a chosen body of comrades—Maude Glynne also coming to bid farewell to her friend.

Lola never looked handsomer than now, carefully attired in a travelling dress. No one would ever have supposed that in the tall, dark-eyed, graceful beauty they beheld one who, a few weeks before, had been but the slave handmaiden of Maude Glynne.

For a short time we will leave her, and proceed to other episodes essential to our story.

CHAPTER XLIX.

VARLEY FANG'S OATH.

VARLEY FANG, after his discomfiture, was not to be seen or heard of in New Orleans or the neighbourhood. He had watched the destruction of his house by fire from his place of concealment in the cane-brake, and, gnashing his teeth with rage, swore to take a terrible vengeance.

“Aha! the rebel scum—the hounds! it is their turn

now, but mine will come! Wait till the city falls—wait till the Yankee flag floats over New Orleans, and then I'll make them pay, through themselves and their families, for this outrage! And the girl, too. Ha! I have not yet done with her. A second time foiled—the *third time I win!*”

Presently, when all was still, and he felt assured that his enemies had ridden off, he came forth from his concealment, and made his way to the stables—the glare of the flames consuming his house giving ample light. He selected one out of three horses, and saddling him, mounted and rode away. Pausing at the end of the straight road leading across the plantation to what was once his splendid plantation-house, he turned in his saddle, and as the flames shot high aloft, he raised his clenched hand, and swore a bitter oath.

“No mercy, no quarter—that shall henceforth be my motto! Gentlemen of Louisiana—Knights of the Fiery Cross, as some of you call yourselves in your foolish vanity—I will compass your ruin and the downfall of your childish order, and condign punishment for all concerned. You and your wives and daughters and sisters shall have cause to remember this night's work! Henceforth I will live for vengeance!”

Then he rode on, and was soon lost in the darkness.

Varley Fang, his heart swelling with bitterness, rode on rapidly, but cautiously. He made for the city of New Orleans, but when within a mile or so of it swerved to the right, and instead of passing through the principal part, made his way through the low French quarter, and so round to the down-river side of the city. At the extreme outskirts were a number of wretched huts, inhabited almost exclusively by negroes, who were permitted to hire themselves out, paying a stipulated sum each day or week to their masters, and retaining for themselves whatever they could earn over and above. This was common at all times, and more so than ever now, when so many planters were away and unable personally to superintend their human chattels. It was to this desolate quarter that Varley Fang guided his horse, picking his way carefully among the wet, muddy lanes (for the whole district lay below the level of

the river), looking cautiously to the right and left, and starting ever and anon when he saw a human form. On these occasions he would draw his cloak up closer around his face and slouch his hat over his eyes. Evidently he was in considerable fear of being seen and recognized.

Presently he halted, and looking about him for a moment or two, as if uncertain where he was, he dismounted, and commenced picking his way on foot. At last he seemed to make out where he was, and striding up to one of the most miserable-looking of the many miserable huts, he knocked sharply with his knuckles. A light was burning within, although it was now near daybreak, and after a moment or two's pause, a gruff voice asked—

“Who's dah?”

“I, Varley Fang. Open quickly.”

Instantly the door was thrown open, and Fang, entering, found himself in the presence of two people.

They are both acquaintances of ours. One is the terribly grotesque mutineer negro chief, Sandy-with-the-Hump; the other Sebastian, the brother of Lola. Varley started when he saw the latter, and turned pale. For a moment he seemed inclined to beat a hasty retreat, and looked uneasily behind him at the door, which the huge nigger quickly closed.

He remembered his attempt on Lola, and the cruel treatment to which she had been subjected at his hands and that of his paid accomplices. He saw before him the girl's brother, and knowing the young fellow's tiger nature he trembled inwardly, forgetting for a moment or two that Sebastian, himself a runaway slave, could scarcely know anything.

Sebastian Valasco had again run away from the estate of Hubert Glynne, and was now hiding in company with Sandy-with-the-Hump, who also was sought after and liable to arrest and punishment at any moment.

“It's only one of young Glynne's field hands. Like me, he's got tire ob de whip an' de chain, an' make a run for his liberty.”

“How long have you been here?” asked Fang, suspiciously, of Sebastian.

“More than a week.”

"What did you run away for again? You would have done wisely, I should have thought, to have remained, at least until your wounds were well."

"I would rather bear the pain of my scarce healed wounds than the heartache—the crushing misery of knowing that I am a slave."

"Where is Hyæna Jones?" asked Fang, sharply.

"I know where to find him, but he won't be fit for anything for a week. He's come back, wounded—shot through the thigh."

"Curse him!—just when I wanted him most. How the devil did he get hurt?"

"Don't know; he's surly as a bear, and won't speak. He came here, and den went on to ole Mope, de black doctor, and he told him he mout stop in his hut for a week, tell he was well, if he could pay."

"Ah! then you know where to find him?"

"Yes; at ole Mope's."

"Do you think he could manage to start off at once down river?"

"Not possible."

A bitter oath broke from Varley Fang. "A thousand curses! I am in ill-luck. The time to strike the blow—the great blow—has come, and behold the instrument is wanting."

"I am here—I whom de scornful white oberseer named Sandy-wid-de-Hump. Ah! but I'll hump some ob dem, yet."

Sebastian pricked up his ears at Varley Fang's words.

"The blow!—what blow? Is it a blow to strike our fetters off? Is it a blow which shall smite our accursed tyrants?"

Varley Fang's eyes gleamed with sudden fire. There was an instrument ready to his hand—no other than Lola's brother. The service was a dangerous one, and would require all the skill of the crafty Hyæna to perform and get back in safety. This rash youth might serve his turn, and instead of escaping, might fall into the hands of the Confederates.

A brilliant thought struck Varley Fang, one worthy of even that monster of cruelty, Hyæna Jones. He wished to

send a verbal message to the Yankee fleet, which lay below the forts and obstructions which they dared not attempt to force. The message would be merely a verbal one, so that if the spy were caught, he, Varley Fang, would not be further compromised. Should he succeed in delivering it, however, Varley Fang would cause his betrayal, and take care that he should bear that about him which would insure his speedy execution by hanging.

Thus would he be revenged on Lola, who had foiled him, by leading her brother to an ignominious death.

When once he had formed a plan, Mr. Fang was prompt enough, and fertile in expedients in carrying it out. Nor was he many moments thinking ere he replied to Sebastian's question.

"Yes, my lad, it is; but the mission is a dangerous one."

"I care not for the danger, so that I be assured that if I succeed disaster and ruin may befall these accursed white tyrants."

"The blow which is to be struck is one which will make this upstart Confederacy quiver to its heart's core; which will cause the ship of state to stagger, and mayhap to founder, notwithstanding that lately there has been a fair wind of prosperity. If the project I have in hand succeeds, it will be the heaviest blow possible for the South, short of complete conquest—a blow which twenty victories in the field cannot compensate for."

"What, then, is this great blow which is to be struck? What will happen if I succeed in carrying your message, and your scheme succeeds completely?"

"My scheme will succeed—must succeed—provided only that the Yankees have notice of the time when it is to be put in operation."

"And the result—what is this great result?—the winning of a battle, the capture of a fort?"

"No."

"What then, is it?"

"First I will tell you what you have to do," said Varley Fang, speaking slowly and deliberately, "so that you can judge of the danger and your ability to succeed."

"Well?"

The slave panted with excitement, which Fang purposely fed.

"You know that a Yankee fleet, with a large land force and transports, is down the river below the Forts Jackson and St. Philip, one on each side of the river."

"Yes, I know it, and wonder at their cowardice in not forcing a passage."

"Gently, young man; not so fast. At present it is impossible for them to force a passage."

"Nothing is impossible. Were I admiral of the fleet I would——"

"You would cause the destruction of all your vessels, and utterly fail to burst through the obstructions and pass the forts."

"At least I would try."

"And fail miserably. Listen patiently, however, and I will tell you how it is possible to succeed. About half a mile below the two forts—which are mounted with the heaviest guns—and in full range of the cannon, is a raft of eleven half-sunken schooners, connected together by a heavy chain. This obstruction is directly under the guns of the forts, and it could not possibly be broken through by the Yankees, even if unmolested, in less than half an hour. If you knew anything of military matters you would know that heavy guns, such as the forts mount, would sink every vessel in ten minutes. Now, your task is this—that is, if you choose to undertake it. You will have to make your way down the river, avoiding all rebel posts and armed parties, and get across to the Yankee fleet. Then, all you will have to do will be to ask for General Butler, and give him a message from me. After that you must return to New Orleans, and wait on the steps of the St. Charles Hotel every evening at sunset, until you are accosted by an officer in the uniform of the rebels."

"The rebel uniform!"

"Yes—do you not understand? he will be a Yankee in disguise—what the Confederates would call a spy, I suppose. He will say to you 'Washington,' and you will reply 'Baltimore.' Then you may give him a packet of papers which I will entrust to you if you are willing to undertake the task."

"I fear not the task, so that the result be commensurate with the risk. What will be the result if I succeed in delivering your message to General Butler? and what is the message?"

"I will answer your last question first. The message is this:—

"Let the fleet boldly steam up the river, and pass the forts, at an hour before dawn on this night week. The centre of the raft—the great obstruction—will be destroyed. They can wait and listen, and when they hear the explosion of a torpedo they may rest assured that the obstruction is destroyed, so far at least as its centre is concerned."

"And this will be done?"

"Yes."

"Can you do it?"

"I have planned it. If you want to know who will carry it into effect, I reply this man and Hyæna Jones—slaves like yourself."

Sebastian turned to Sandy-with-the-Hump. "Is that so, Sandy?"

The huge nigger bowed his head, while a grim smile stole across his features.

"And you and Hyæna Jones are going to blow up the raft?"

"We mean to try."

Sebastian, his eyes glistening, his sallow cheek flushed, turned again to Varley Fang.

"And what will be the result if all this succeeds as you expect?"

"The result? Why, the fleet will steam up, run the gauntlet of the forts, and be out of danger ere they have suffered much harm."

"And then——?"

"The fleet will steam up the river."

"And then——?"

"The city will be at the mercy of the Yankees; and, in four-and-twenty hours, the Stars and Stripes will float where now flies the rebel flag."

"You mean to say that, if I succeed, New Orleans will fall?"

"New Orleans will fall—the real capital of the South

will fall a prey to the Yankees. Butler will be governor, and I—I shall be revenged !”

“And I also,” Sebastian cried. “I will do it, were it ten times as dangerous and difficult. Not for gold—not for fame—but *for vengeance on the cursed planters !*”

CHAPTER L.

VARLEY FANG PROCEEDS TO PUT HIS PLOT IN EXECUTION.

VARLEY FANG made all his arrangements deliberately, and with admirable skill. Sebastian was eager to be off at once on his mission—burning with hatred—his heart glowing with the hope of being an instrument in inflicting such a blow on the race of whom, of all others, he hated most—on the men whom, of all breathing things, he most loathed, even while he was forced to acknowledge their insolent courage.

Oh, the thought was sweet indeed that he, the despised, over-worked, and whipped slave, should have the opportunity of turning, and, at the same time, wounding and humiliating these haughty Southerners.

Willingly would he have braved greater dangers for a chance of less revenge.

In Varley Fang he had no great confidence, but he knew that the negro, Sandy-with-the-Hump, was as earnest as himself, and imbued with the same bloodthirsty hatred of the white men—their common tyrants.

Varley Fang, however, would not despatch him at once.

“No,” he said; “I must first procure the documents which you are to deliver in New Orleans, to the gentleman in uniform, on the steps of the St. Charles, after you have succeeded. Sandy, you must see and procure stabling for my horse. As for myself, I am tired, and will rest here till dark. Besides, it is essential to the success of our scheme that I should not be seen in New Orleans. Get me the blanket off the saddle. I shall lie down, and sleep as long

as I can. You had better be quick and see to the horse. It will be broad daylight in half an hour. What about the Hyæna? We must have him here this evening."

"I will take care he knows," said Sandy. He will be here if his wound ain't got worse."

No more was said, and Varley Fang, rolling himself up in the horse-rug, went off into a sound sleep.

There is no greater fallacy than the prevalent one that people with a load of guilt on their minds cannot sleep. It may be the fact in a few rare cases—such, for instance, as a man, who, under the influence of passion or strong temptation, commits his first crime; but, as a rule, when a man can calmly commit desperate crimes, the remembrance of them does not disturb his rest or injure his appetite.

Varley slept well and soundly. In the first place, he was really tired out, and, in the second, had not the slightest remorse for what he had done, or compunction at the cruel and desperate treachery he meditated.

In the evening, Hyæna Jones limped into the hut, pale from loss of blood, and very sore, by reason of his wound. Shortly after dark, Varley Fang went out, and returned in an hour's time, with a sealed packet, which he delivered to Sebastian Velasco.

"Here is the packet you are to give to the person who accosts you on the steps of the St. Charles, when you return, after accomplishing your task; and, lest you want it, here is money."

So saying, he placed ten dollars in the slave's hand.

"Good—by to-morrow night General Butler shall have your message."

Sebastian went out, and, without a moment's delay, started on his errand. He had more than forty miles to traverse on foot ere he reached the part of the river where lay the Yankee fleet.

But he cared not for that.

The hope of revenge urged him on, and, true to his promise, on the following night, General Benjamin Butler had received the message of Varley Fang.

"Now, Sandy, and you, Hyæna, we must see about getting these things on board a boat."

"I can do nothing to-night," groaned the Hyæna. "Olc

Mope says the inflammation will go down in a few hours. I can't do anything till it does."

"Bah!—only a flesh wound," said Varley Fang, contemptuously. "By the way, how did you get it?"

"How did I get it?—why, you might know. That she-tiger that you set me on to track for you—curse her!"

"Curse her, indeed! She escaped you, I presume?"

"Yes, and put a bullet through my leg; but I'll have my revenge on the spiteful slut some day."

Varley said nothing, but inwardly resolved that he, too, would have his hour of triumph.

"So she escaped you, eh? More fool you to let her."

He did not intend to let the Hyæna know that she had rushed into the fowler's net while endeavouring to get away from him. He knew nothing as to all that had passed between the Hyæna, Jabez Hack, and the girl, and presently asked—

"Where is my fellow, Jabez?"

Jones turned slightly pale at the suddenness of the question, and the sharp glance with which it was accompanied.

"You'll never see Jabez alive again, boss!"

"What, dead! how's that?" asked Varley, in surprise.

"The girl shot him!"

"And you mean to tell me that you two fellows allowed this girl to kill one of you and wound the other? I don't believe it—it's a lie!"

"Have it as you like. I know that she shot me, that's all; as to Jabez, that's his business."

"Where is he—his body, I mean?"

"He was by the side of the Levée; and after he was shot he rolled in the river."

"So much the worse for him," said Fang, coolly.

Now, he did not believe one word of this story, but, nevertheless, did not choose to say so. He could not make the affair out. There was more behind, he felt convinced, but resolved to wait and find out for himself. He had no conception of the real truth of the desperate fight and tragedy of the hut.

"Very well," he said, carelessly, "let it be to-morrow, then. Meanwhile, take care that Oliver knows the big case

will be wanted to-morrow night—two hours after midnight. You have arranged about the barge, Sandy?"

"Well, 'tain't 'xactly a barge, boss; but it'll serve our turn. We can float down stream in it."

"And you know where to meet me?"

"Yes, a mile and a half above the forts."

"Right; the Hyæna will come with me in the waggon. I have got a pass for ammunition to go to Fort Jackson, so that is all right. You are sure you can manage to take the boat down stream yourself?"

"Sure as death I will, boss."

"And you've provided for enough timber to make the raft?"

"Tink I'm a fool? This hyar affair ain't goin' to break through by my fault—don't trouble yer head."

"Very well; I shall depend upon you. Hyæna, come with me. Oh, you can't walk. Well, meet me here to-morrow night. I must venture out, though 'tis dangerous. Good night, Sandy; pleasant dreams."

"Stay 'bit, boss; let's drink success to the cause."

Hereupon the huge nigger produced a bottle, which contained fiery Bourbon whisky, and just saying—"Here's death and damnation to all the cursed Southerners, and good luck to the Yankees!" he took a big drink. "Drink that, boss, an' I'll know you's in ear-est."

Varley Fang laughed a hard, dry laugh, and then drank the toast.

He chafed under the familiarity and want of respect of his accomplices towards him, but did not think it advisable to betray his feelings.

CHAPTER LI.

THE DOOMED CITY.

WHEN it was known in New Orleans that the Federal fleet was advancing up the river, and would probably attack the great forts, Jackson and St. Philip, which stood gloomy and threatening sentinels over the river, no alarm was felt.

The fleet was of formidable size, and admirably equipped in every way. It was declared again and again, with the utmost confidence, that New Orleans was impregnable, and probably there were very few Confederate officers who believed in the possibility of its capture. The river forts, Jackson and St. Philip, were considered but as the outer line of defences. Large sums of money had been expended to line the shores of the river with batteries; the besides, occupied by a considerable force, which was, however, supposed to be much larger than was the fact. In the harbour of New Orleans, too, there was a fleet of twelve gunboats, one iron-clad steamer, and the famous ram, *Manassas*.

The Confederate authorities did not hesitate to express the most unbounded confidence in the safety of the city; and among those considered best qualified to judge, the greater part refused even to entertain the possibility of the enemy penetrating the outer line of defence constituted by the river forts. General Duncan was in command of these forts, which were sufficiently garrisoned, and amply supplied with ammunition.

The citizens of New Orleans, feeling thus secure, occupied themselves as usual with business and pleasure, nor dreamed that desperate treason was at work in their midst.

It was supposed that General Snell had under his command, in the city, a large and well-disciplined force. This, however, was a great mistake. His army had been greatly depleted to reinforce that at Corinth, and since the 1st of March he had sent ten full regiments to General Beauregard, besides many companies of cavalry and artillery. At this very time he had under his command only twenty-eight hundred men, two-thirds of whom were volunteer companies which had only lately joined.

The confidence of the Southerners in the impregnability of the forts which defended the river was not altogether without reason. The forts had again and again been bombarded by the Yankee fleet, but without sustaining any damage of importance. Nearly 25,000 shells had been thrown by the enemy's mortar-boats, many thousands of which had fallen within the forts. In spite of this heavy bombardment the works easily held out; only three of the

guns had been dismounted, and the garrison had not lost more than twenty men in killed and wounded. We will now proceed to relate the progress of Varley Fang's meditated treachery.

* * * * *

About a mile above Fort Jackson, the gloomy embasuries of which frowned threateningly out on the river, there runs into the broad and swiftly flowing Mississippi a small, sluggish stream. At the spot where this joins the river, there is a small estuary or creek.

The time is half an hour before midnight of the 23rd of April. The night is sufficiently dark, though there is light enough to render the passage of a vessel or a boat between the forts unseen a matter of impossibility. In this creek there is moored a good-sized boat, and two men are busy unloading her of rough logs of timber, which they dispose close to the shore in such a way as to make a raft. On the bank stands another man, wrapped in a cloak, and with hat slouched over his eyes. By his side are some small boxes, a barrel, and other appliances of strange shape, coils of wire, bits of iron, &c.

The two men at work unloading the boat are no other than Hyæna Jones and Sandy-with-the-Hump, and he who stands on the bank watching them is Varley Fang.

"Now, bear a hand, you fellows—it's just midnight," he said, looking at his watch, which he did by the light of a cigar. "Make those logs fast together. It will take a good hour fixing the machine, and seeing the clockwork all secure, and another hour to float down to the chain of schooners."

The two men worked away silently, and, as they were thus employed, Varley Fang forced open one of the cases, and commenced a careful inspection of its contents. This was the clockwork of which he had spoken—a collection of wheels and springs, so arranged that a catch would be liberated after the machine had been set going a certain time—five, ten, or twenty minutes, as the operator chose.

The two men worked up to their knees in water at the construction of the raft, which was merely a few logs bound together by rope, and covered by half-a-dozen planks.

After about an hour's work they came out of the water.

"Now, boss, I reckon we're about all ready."

"Good—then we'll see about getting the fixings on board. You must be very careful they are well balanced, and also mind the barrel don't get wet. It's pretty well water-tight, but still damp might cause it to miss fire, and ruin everything."

The barrel in question was a strong wooden one, bound round, first, with strong tarred rope, enveloping every part of it; then, above this, was a layer of stout iron wire; and, above all, a strong iron band, firmly welded by the blacksmith's art. From one end of this cask there proceeded a small spout or nozzle, to which was attached a piece of gutta percha tubing; and through this latter ran a long piece of touch-paper, carefully prepared.

The barrel was first lifted, and carefully placed on board the hastily constructed raft. Then it was firmly wedged clear of water, and bound in its place. Next came the small box, from which proceeded another nozzle, also charged with touch-paper, and which, at the proper moment, would be attached to the barrel.

This, too, was carefully placed, and fixed in the desired position.

Last of all, came the larger case, containing the rough arrangement of clockwork.

"You perfectly understand how to manage this affair, you fellows? Hyæna, I explained it to you. As the handle and index now stand, the hammer falls in half an hour; by turning it to the left, you can increase the time to an hour; and to the right, you can decrease it to five minutes. See—when the handle is turned, so as to be opposite this little peg, the catch will be liberated in the shortest time—five minutes. When it is turned as far as possible to the left, it will take the longest time—an hour. I should think a quarter of an hour, or ten minutes, will be ample time for you two to get safe away. Make it as short as possible, lest it should be discovered."

"All right, boss."

"Now, are you ready?"

"All ready."

"Then I will make the connection—so! Now, all you will have to do will be to move the second handle; that will start the clockwork, for it is wound up. I'll guarantee it won't miss. I've tried it dozens of times."

"Dar's no fear ob his goin' off too soon?" growled Sandy-with-the-Hump, suspiciously.

"None whatever. If you manage properly it is as harmless as a musical box. Now, then, shove it off from the shore a little. That'll do."

The rude raft was slowly pushed out into the stream, and then the Hyæna and Sandy-with-the-Hump waded into the water.

"Get round on the other side, so that you can't be seen from the fort, and take care there's nothing but your heads above water."

"All right, boss."

The two men waded deeper in, till the water reached their shoulders, and then they allowed their feet to lift from the ground, and swam quietly round to the other side of the raft, which they commenced slowly propelling down the creek and into the river.

"Say, Sandy, d'ye think there's any alligators? Thought I felt the rough back o' one then!" said the Hyæna, grinning maliciously. Even then, embarked as they were together in an enterprise of great danger, he could take pleasure in tormenting and alarming his companion.

So soon as they were well out in the river, the stream carried them swiftly on; and, in five minutes from the time the queer-looking raft had been pushed out from the shore, it looked like a huge "snag," or part of a floating keel being borne onward by the current.

Varley Fang stood and watched this strangely freighted barque as the old Mississippi swept it onwards on its broad bosom.

Looking at his watch again, he muttered, half aloud,—

"Half an hour, with the stream running at this rate will take them past the forts; another half-hour will bring them up alongside the chain of schooners; and, in a quarter more, the issue of this my long-matured scheme will be decided. At a quarter or twenty minutes past three I may expect the explosion and the signal for the capture of New

Orleans, and the ultimate downfall of this upstart Confederacy."

Varley Fang paced up and down by the side of the river, now looking on the frowning forts, whose outline could be dimly made out in the gloom of night, and now peering down the river in the vain effort to pierce the darkness and discern the raft bearing his infernal machine.

We, however, will follow the fortunes of Hyæna Jones and Sandy-with-the-Hump, leaving Varley Fang standing on the river bank, watching and waiting.

CHAPTER LII.

THE INFERNAL MACHINE.

THE words of Hyæna Jones touching alligators caused a thrill of horror to shoot through the frame of the negro, Sandy. He was no coward, but had not hitherto bestowed a thought on this species of danger. He struck out with desperate energy, and propelled the raft faster through the water.

"Come," he said, "let's shoot her on. The water's cold, and I don't like de t'ought ob de alligators."

"Take it easy, my chicken. The stream runs fast enuff, and there's no need for us to bust ourselves a-swimmin' Maybe we'll have to swim for our lives by and by, and want all our strength; so take it easy, Sandy."

"Take it easy! Dat's all very well sayin' take it easy, when ebbery momen' 'specks to feel a alligator gnawin' at me! Strike out, I say!"

Sandy-with-the-Hump swam strong and well, and the raft, aided by the stream, floated swiftly down and approached the forts. They would have to pass within a few hundred yards of Fort Jackson, on the left bank, so, of course, there was considerable danger of their being seen and fired upon, or a boat sent in pursuit. As to their fate, if thus caught floating a torpedo down the river, there could be little doubt as to what it would be—a halter and a tree would soon end both their lives.

"Stop swimming, and keep close under the lee," muttered Hyæna Jones, in a low voice. "If they see any motion they'll know it's not a 'snag,' and, as sure as death, will give us a shower of grape?"

Thus admonished, Sandy-with-the-Hump stopped using his legs and one free arm, and both of them lying close to the raft, on the opposite side to the fort, with only their heads above water, they let the river float them down past the dangerous fort.

Here there was a bright look-out kept; but, in the darkness, the rough outline of the raft and its burden looked more like a "snag" than anything else, and though they floated by within two hundred yards, they escaped observation.

Hyæna Jones breathed more freely. He was of opinion that the greatest danger had been surmounted, and gave his thoughts free play.

The reward—the great reward which was to be shared between him and his fellow labourer in this desperate and dangerous undertaking?

Share it with him! Why should he share it? Why not have it all himself? And then there arose in his mind, suddenly, and in full completeness, the outlines of one of the most cold-blooded, treacherous, and scoundrelly schemes possible to conceive.

If it be true that Satan actually, when opportunity offers, prompts and supplies evil thoughts to those inclined to listen, it may be well supposed that this horrible idea was whispered into the ear of Hyæna Jones by the arch-fiend himself.

A low, chuckling laugh broke from the scoundrel. He was so dyed in guilt, imbrued in blood, that he absolutely took a wild-beast sort of pleasure in the contemplation of his own crimes.

"He! he! he!—ha! ha! ha! Oh, Sandy, I fix you by and by, and cop all de dollars!"

The idea seemed to give him immense amusement. Sandy heard his companion's low, chuckling laugh.

"What are you makin' dat row for, you dam fool? You want to be heard, I s'pose?"

"I just a larfin' Sandy, to think what a rage the

darned Suth'ners will be in when they knows how we've tricked 'em."

"But we ain't done it yet!"

"Just as good; look out, now; we'll be down on the schooners in five minutes."

The obstruction to the flow of the great river by these half-sunken vessels caused the water to scethe and bubble and rush on with terrible impetuosity, as is the case with a river passing through the arches of a bridge.

"Keep her to de right—keep her to de right; swim hard!" cried Sandy; "or we'll fetch in de middle ob de chain, instead ob right on one ob de schooners."

They both used their utmost exertions, but in spite of this the current bore the raft on so forcibly as to lodge it with a rude shock against the chain which connected these sunken vessels together.

It was necessary to haul her close up alongside one of the schooners in order to make sure of success.

This occupied them nearly half an hour; but at last the raft was fast moored on the up-stream side of one of the schooners.

Then all was in readiness, and Hyæna Jones crawled up on to the raft.

"This hyar affair won't hold more than one at a time, Sandy," he said; "so you jest hold on in the water while I see the machinery's all right. I think I'll set him for a quarter of an hour——"

"Not yet!" cried Sandy; "wait till I get up—dis chile don't want to be busted up!"

"Certainly not, Sandy; I'll see that right. You hold on a minute—ah! here's the little handle—quarter of an hour, lots o' time."

"Don't turn it yet, I tell you!"

"All right; I'm jest seein' as the wheels works all straight."

As he spoke, Hyæna Jones slowly and quietly turned the handle which started the clockwork, and also at the same moment the one that should cause the hammer to fall in *five minutes*. He waited for about a minute and a half, and then said to Sandy-with-the-Hump—

"Sandy, you get up on the raft, I'm going round on the

other side to make another rope fast ; then I'll come back and set the machine. Don't you touch it, 'cause you don't understand——"

" But it's going now—I can hear the wheels clicking !"

" I tell you it's all right ; you climb up, I shall be back in two minutes."

About half of the five had now elapsed. Hyæna Jones slid into the water, and, slipping under the chain, struck out down stream with might and main.

Almost at the same moment Sandy crawled on to the raft.

Another minute passed !

Another !

There was only half a minute more.

" Hyæna, whar is you ?" These wheels is a clickin' away like snakes !"

CHAPTER LIII.

THE EXPLOSION.

HYÆNA JONES, after taking to the water, struck out and swam with might and main down stream. The current ran swiftly, and in the space of two minutes he was quite two hundred yards away from the chains of sunken schooners, and the raft on which was the infernal machine. He heard the voice of Sandy-with-the-Hump calling him, but paused not in his exertions to put as great a distance as possible between himself and that death-bearing raft.

" Hyæna, whar is you ? Tell, for these hyar wheels is a goin' round."

Sandy shouted at the top of his voice, and his treacherous comrade heard him. A grim smile lighted up his evil countenance, as, pausing for a moment, he looked back.

Meanwhile, the fatal five minutes had all but expired. Sandy-with-the-Hump was beginning to get uneasy, not so much at the clicking of the clock-work as the mysterious disappearance of his companion.

Suddenly there darted a horrid suspicion across his mind—a suspicion which caused his hair to stand on end, and a cold perspiration to burst forth on his body.

The Hyæna had fixed the handle to explode in a short space of time, and had left him to his fate!

No sooner had this terrible thought suggested itself, than he felt sure it was correct.

Oh, horror!

The clicking suddenly ceased, and there was a quick, rattling sound, such as a clock emits just before the striking.

By this time Hyæna Jones was swimming down stream fully two hundred and fifty yards off.

There was a flash of light. He knew what it signified, and instantly dived like an otter—holding his breath, and striking out below the surface to prevent his rising.

Not until he found it impossible to remain longer under water, did he permit himself to rise.

The whole river was in commotion, and, even immersed as he was, he felt a stunning shock, and a rush of water round him, as though a cataract had suddenly swept down on him.

When he emerged, the darkness of night was lit up by a lurid glare, and he knew that burning fragments were still hurtling through the air, and falling hissing into the water. There was a red glow, too, in the direction of the chain of obstruction, which told of the terrible destruction which had taken place.

The vessel against which the infernal machine had been moored had been blown to atoms. The chain was destroyed, and the whole of the schooners cast adrift in broken fragments, and swept away by the tide. So intense was the heat, that portions of those on either side of the one to which the raft was attached were set on fire, and so floated down the stream, forming beacons to guide the Yankee fleet to the passage of the forts.

It was these burning fragments which caused the red lurid light the Hyæna noticed as he rose to the surface. Shortly the disturbance in the air and water subsided, and Jones struck out boldly for the shore. He could make out in the gloom the dark masses of the Yankee ships

steaming up according to arrangement; could hear the thumping of the paddles, and the working of the engines. He had reason to fear being run down in the darkness, so used his utmost strength, and in the space of five minutes waded through the mud, and stood on the bank of the old Mississippi, whose course he had thrown open to the hated Yankee invader.

And what of Sandy-with-the-Hump? Standing as he did on the raft at the very moment of the explosion, there could be little doubt as to his fate.

Had his body been made of wrought iron, instead of flesh, bone, and sinews, it would have been rent and torn to atoms by the force of that fearful blow-up.

The Hyæna stood panting with exertion; his clothes dripping with water, his legs encased with wet mud; and gazed out towards the remnants of the chain of schooners.

"A good night's work," he muttered; "reckon there's no fear o' mister Sandy a-comin' to claim his share o' the dollars. Lor, how he must ha' been busted up! Ha! ha! there they go."

It was the flash and roar of many cannon which caused this exclamation on his part. The parties in the batteries had been for a moment bewildered by the sudden explosion; but now, after a few minutes wasted, the Yankee fleet was discovered approaching the almost destroyed chain, and, one by one, each cannon opened, as the astounded gunners ran to their posts. The foremost of the Yankee vessels was within a hundred yards of the scene of the explosion ere she was discovered and fired upon.

Commodore Farragut's flag-ship, the "Hartford," was the first to pass the now demolished obstruction, and steam up abreast of the forts.

By the time the "Hartford" had passed the spot of the explosion and approached the forts, the light of dawn was just appearing in the east. In half an hour from the firing of the infernal machine, the Federal fleet was hotly engaged with the forts on either side, firing broadsides of round shot, grape, and shrapnel. Just as daylight lit up the scene, the Confederate fleet, consisting of seventeen vessels only, came down the river, and, notwithstanding the tremendous odds

the Yankee fleet, be it remembered, consisted of forty-six vessels, carrying two hundred and eighty-six guns and twenty-one mortars), boldly attacked the enemy.

Some of the Confederate gunboats carried two guns; others only one. Notwithstanding this, and the enemy's overwhelming force, they fought with the utmost desperation, until all were driven ashore, or scuttled, or burned by their commanders. The engagement was of a terrific nature. The forts opened fire with all their guns, which was returned by the Federal vessels, till there was one grand crash of five hundred cannon all belching forth fire and smoke together.

In about an hour several of the enemy's ships passed the forts, not, however, without having been severely marked by the fire of the garrison.

General Snell arrived from New Orleans in the very height of the action, and was just in time to see the Federal fleet passing Fort Philip, and to witness the desperate but ineffectual attempts of the Confederate gunboats to check its triumphant progress.

General Snell had come down the river in the gunboat "Doubloon," and soon the enemy's vessel "Iowa" darted in pursuit of her, and was rapidly catching her up, when another rebel ship, the "Governor Moore," dashed at the "Iowa," and ran into her three times.

The Federal vessel managed to escape, and was again chasing the "Doubloon," when the rebel gunboat "Yuikman" attacked her—ran into her amidships, and sank her.

The "Governor Moore" then steamed down the river into the midst of the enemy's fleet, darting hither and thither, attacking first one and then another, until the last round of ammunition had been fired away. Captain Kennon, her commander, then ran her ashore, and, with his own hands, applied the torch to her.

One by one the Confederate vessels were either sunk or forced to follow the example of the "Governor Moore;" and in this way, fighting to the last, the Confederate naval force on the Mississippi was destroyed, the forts passed, and the great city of New Orleans was at the mercy of the Federal squadron.

It would never have happened but for the disaster to the

chain of obstructions caused by the explosion of the infernal machine.

Varley Fang's last scheme of villany had succeeded but too well, and at six o'clock in the morning the whole Federal fleet were steaming up the river towards the doomed city.

He himself mounted his horse and rode off, his face gleaming with triumph and gratified revenge. He saw with fierce joy the formidable Yankee fleet steaming towards New Orleans, and, knowing that there were no other forts to obstruct, and that the city must fall, he rode on at a slow pace, careful to allow the Federal squadron to precede him.

"At last!—at last!" he cried aloud. "To-morrow General Butler will take possession of the boasted Crescent City, and then the day of my triumph will have arrived."

And, now, so far as New Orleans is concerned, the fate of that city can be chronicled in a few words.

General Snell rode back along the Levée in hot haste, and brought the disastrous intelligence that the forts had been passed by the enemy, and that the fleet was advancing unopposed on the city.

When called upon by the mayor, he at once announced that the city was indefensible and untenable.

Under these circumstances, and to save his scanty command from destruction, General Snell decided to abandon the city—not, however, until requested to do so by the inhabitants, in order to avoid its destruction by bombardment. A demand made by Admiral Farragut for the surrender of his troops was positively refused, and General Snell withdrew at his leisure.

Two days afterwards it was said that the inhabitants had changed their purpose, and, though the Yankee fleet lay moored within easy range, would incur a bombardment rather than surrender.

General Snell promptly offered to return and hold the city as long as a man and a shot were left.

On consideration, however, the offer was not accepted, it being decided that the safety of the large number of women and children should be looked to. The

city could have done little or nothing

successful resistance, and it was decided that the enemy's fleet should be allowed to take possession.

Accordingly, on the next day, the Federal ships appeared off the Chalmette batteries, which exchanged a few shots with them, but without effect.

On they came, taking up positions eight or nine hundred yards apart, until the line occupied a distance of five miles, and the whole city and suburbs were within range of their batteries.

Thus fell New Orleans, the real capital of the Confederate States.

CHAPTER LIV

THE FALL OF NEW ORLEANS.

THE scene in New Orleans when it was known the city was to be given up was of an extraordinary description. At first there fell a deep and sullen gloom, which pervaded all. Men seemed scarcely able to realize the astounding fact, so unexpected and disastrous.

After the first shock, however, there came a gleam of hope, destined but to prove illusory.

There were no troops with the Yankee fleet as yet (for General Butler's command had not yet been able to follow), and so, though the Yankee vessels lay moored in the stream, the town was not formally taken possession of.

There was yet, then, some hope.

The inhabitants fondly thought that, as the forts still held out and the enemy's transports were thus prevented from coming up the river, the place might yet be saved. The fleet had not troops with which to occupy it, and there was no way of access except by the lakes. It had been determined to cut the Levée, and so flood the country below the city, should General Butler, in command of the land forces, attempt an approach by way of Lake Borgne or Lake Pontchartrain. In the last resource, it was resolved to man the lines around the city, and fight the invaders as best they could.

These hopes were suddenly and for ever dispelled by the news of the fall of forts St. Philip and Jackson.

Treachery had been again at work; and, though the works were uninjured, General Duncan was forced to surrender.

The news of the fall of the river forts convinced the most sanguine that all hope of resistance was over.

The scenes on the water and in the city were alike extraordinary.

The Confederate troops were busy in the work of evacuation and in removing stores and ammunition: the streets were thronged with carts, drays, and vehicles of all descriptions; officers on horseback were galloping hither and thither, receiving and executing orders; the streets were crowded with persons rushing about in a state of senseless fury. Men cursed and stormed and swore! women shrieked, wept aloud, and invoked maledictions on the heads of the hated foe. Meanwhile, a great destruction of property which might be useful to the enemy went on. Huge loads of cotton might be seen rumbling through the streets, on the road to the Levée, there to be burned.

No sooner was it finally decided that the city must be given up than the work of destruction commenced. Vast columns of smoke ascended to the sky, darkening the face of heaven and obscuring the noon-day sun. For five miles along the Levée flames darted through the lurid atmosphere. Great ships and steamers, wrapped in fire, floated down the river, threatening the Federal vessels with destruction. In front of the various houses, and at other points along the Levée, great quantities of cotton had been piled up and set fire to. Many thousand bales were thus consumed, to the value, it was stated, of nearly two millions of dollars.

The gold and silver in the banks, to the amount of fifteen millions, was removed from the city, and placed by General Snell in security. About a dozen large river steamboats, twelve or fifteen ships (some cotton-laden), a great number of smaller craft, the docks on the other side of the river, the great ram "Mississippi," were all embraced in the fiery sacrifice.

At last the hour came for the final surrender to the enemy, or rather the allowing him to take possession.

About noon a Federal force of marines and sailors landed, and dragged two brass howitzers up in front of the City Hall, where still proudly floated the State flag. No interruption was offered to this party, but all who witnessed it were impressed by the sad solemnity of the occasion. Profound silence pervaded the crowd, but there raged in all breasts a storm of hatred—a passionate desire for revenge. Among the multitude of citizens who thus witnessed their own humiliation, the wet cheeks of the women and the compressed lips of the men, told how deeply the disastrous fall of New Orleans was felt.

The narrative of the fall of New Orleans should be a lesson to nations who in the future may struggle for independence as desperately, as bravely—let us hope not as unsuccessfully—as the Confederate States of America.

Never was there a more miserable story, in which carelessness and over confidence, aided by accident and treachery, combined to produce the astounding result of the almost bloodless fall of a city which was the commercial capital of the South, and in the defence of which they could well have afforded to sacrifice an army.

The extent of the disaster was not to be disguised by the most sanguine. It all but annihilated the Confederacy in Louisiana; separated the states of Mississippi, Texas, and Arkansas from the rest; diminished the rebel resources by the loss of the greatest grain and cattle countries in the world; gave to the enemy the Mississippi river, with all its means of navigation; and, finally, led to the virtual forced abandonment of the great and fruitful valley of the Mississippi.

It did all this and more, and yet it was very far from deciding the fate of the war. Even one such gigantic disaster or blunder could not cause the utter ruin of the struggling nationality—it required a series of such.

In the treacherous plot so successfully carried out, which resulted in the blowing up of the obstructions and the opening of a passage for the Federal fleet, there were four persons immediately concerned. These were Varley Fang, Hyana Jones, Sandy-with-the-Hump, and Sebastian Velasco, Hubert Glynne's slave, and brother of Lela—who has played so prominent a part in our story.

With the fate of Sandy the reader is already acquainted. Through the demon-like ferocity and treachery of his accomplice, the Hyæna, he perished when the infernal machine exploded.

As for Hyæna Jones, he witnessed the passage of the fleet, and then, chuckling with ferocious glee, and rubbing his hands, he muttered—

“Good, good! Bully for you, Hyæna! De city falls into the Yankees’ hands, de dollars falls into mine. Fifteen thousand dollars in all—seven thousand five hundred dollars my share, and as much more that fool Sandy’s whack. Oh, my lor! how he must ha’ gone skying up!”

The Hyæna laughed his horrible, grating laugh, as though the thought of his unfortunate comrade being hurled through the air, scorched, torn, and dismembered, was an excellent joke. “Yonder they go—hurrah for the Stars and Stripes! Now, my bully planters, look out for yourselves, your wives, and daughters, and sisters, as you leave behind when you march out o’ the city. I reckon they’ll have a roughish time of it. It’s the turn for the Yankces now, and the niggers; and may I be eternally cussed if I don’t have my share of satisfaction! Alas, my pretty Lola, too,” he cried, suddenly, as he remembered how he had been riled and defeated by the girl. “I reckon I’ll have another try with you. I shall be high in favour, and if with fifteen thousand dollars I can’t carry out anything I undertake, it air strange to me. And now I must be off and keep the appointment with Mr. Varley Fang, for through him I got the dollars. I’m not frightened—he daren’t play *me* false.”

Fang had appointed to meet him at a spot on the Levée about two miles above the forts, and hither the Hyæna hurried.

Varley Fang was awaiting him, his face flushed with triumph, his eyes gleaming with excitement.

“Bravely done—well done, my lad!” he cried. “I stood and watched the explosion; it was splendid. See! yonder they go,” he cried, pointing to the Yankee fleet, “going ahead full speed up the river, the ‘Hartford’ and the Pensacola’ leading.”

"Aye, there they go!—reckon by night the Yankee flag will fly in New Orleans. It was a desperate scheme—an audacious attempt—and crowned with the success it deserved. From this day forth I may count myself a millionaire—the richest man, perhaps, in America."

"You'll take care and see as my little pile of dollars is all right, boss?" said the Hyæna, interrogatively.

Varley himself had such an enormous stake in the success of his treason, that he had forgotten all about the reward his tools were to receive.

"Oh, yes, of course. By the way, where's Sandy?"

"He's busted up," replied the mulatto, coolly.

"Busted up! What do you mean?"

"I reckon he stayed too long by the raft, and was exploded with it."

"What? You don't mean to say he stayed till it blew up?"

"He did so."

"Why, he must have been mad. What could have been his object?"

"Can't say; p'rhaps he was kinder curious to know what 'twere like. Any how, he's blowed up; so I s'pose I'll have the bulk o' the dollars."

Varley Fang was a consummate villain—unscrupulous and cruel where his own plans were concerned. He guessed intuitively that the Hyæna had betrayed his comrade to a terrible death for the sake of his share of the spoil. Fang had but little of the milk of human kindness in his nature, but even he shuddered inwardly at the thought of such desperate and cruel treachery. However, he did not choose to say anything. He was shrewdly of opinion that this was not the only case in which the Hyæna had murdered his accomplice. He remembered what he had told him as to the death of Jabez Hack.

Strange that two men engaged each in a joint undertaking with the mulatto should disappear thus mysteriously.

He eyed the Hyæna closely, who, however, bore the glance unflinchingly, and he replied—

"All right. If Sandy does not turn up, you will receive the whole of the reward."

"When?"

"When General Butler takes possession of the city as military governor."

"And when will that be?"

Varley turned round and looked down the river, where in the distance could be discerned the smoke of numerous steam-vessels.

"Yonder comes his fleet of transports."

"And will they sail right on to the city?"

Varley pointed to the fine forts—St. Philip and Jackson—which, though the fleet had passed, were yet intact.

"They cannot pass till those forts have fallen."

"The Yankee ships have gone past, sah."

"Iron-clads—Butler's are crowded wooden transports."

"Then if the forts do not fall New Orleans cannot be reached by the Yankees."

"The forts will fall."

"When?"

"Perhaps to-day—perhaps to-morrow; at any rate they will fall. Meanwhile the town will lie at the mercy of Farragut, who can bombard it when he pleases."

"But bombarding it won't get the dollars," persisted the Hyæna, who was thinking solely of his reward. "Suppose the forts hold out?"

"They will not hold out, I tell you."

"How do you know?"

"Look here, my good fellow; it matters not how I know, but I do know. Treason is at work within the forts; a large part of the garrison are traitors—Yankees in disguise. I know this, and that the forts must and will be surrendered."

Varley Fang spoke positively, and declined to say any more, and the Hyæna believed him.

"And in the meantime?" he asked.

"In the meantime you can hang about the outskirts of the city, or enter, as you choose. As for me, I shall be careful how I show myself until the Yankees are in full possession."

Thereupon the two separated. Varley Fang mounted his horse and rode slowly along the *Levéé*, looking back towards the forts ever and anon as though he expected some signal.

Hyæna Jones started towards New Orleans, having appointed to meet Varley Fang on the afternoon of the day on which General Butler should enter the city as conqueror.

* * * * *

Of these four conspirators—the principal, Varley Fang, and the other three subordinates—there is one for whom we have not yet accounted.

This is Sebastian—brother of Dolora Velasco.

Intent on his purpose, his heart glowing with fierce joy at the thought of aiding the Yankees against the much hated planters, he started off on his dangerous mission.

So cautiously did he work—so well did he carry out his instructions, that on the third day after leaving New Orleans he had made his way past the forts, and arrived opposite the Yankee fleet, below which lay the flotilla of transports.

He had no great difficulty in communicating with these, and was duly ushered into the presence of General Butler, who occupied a large tent on the bank of the river.

“Well, boy—what is it? Be careful what you’re doing, for if I’ve reason to suspect you’re a rebel spy, I’ll hang you first and have you tried afterwards.”

“I came from New Orleans; but I am not a rebel spy.”

“How should I know that?”

“See here!” and as he spoke, he bared his wrists and showed the marks of manacles. “I have been a slave—I am still a slave if they catch me. I have been chained and flogged, and shall doubtless be chained and flogged again if I am retaken. That is my answer. These scars are the evidences by which you shall know I am not a spy.”

“Have you no other evidence?”

“None but a verbal message.”

“A verbal message?”

“Yes.”

“From whom?”

“From one who says you know him and expect a communication.”

“His name?”

“Varley Fang.”

The Yankee general rose to his feet quite suddenly.

"Ha! is it so?" Let the tent be cleared. Gentlemen all, I must converse with this man alone."

When they were alone together, Butler spoke impatiently, stamping his feet on the ground.

"Now, then, boy! Say what you have to say quickly."

"Varley Fang bade me tell you that all was prepared."

"Well, what next?"

"That in four days from this time the scheme would be put in action."

"What scheme?"

"The scheme of which he says you are cognizant. He bade me tell you that about an hour before daylight on the morning of the 24th of April, the obstruction across the river which bars the passage of the fleet will be blown up, or so destroyed and damaged as to be no longer an obstruction."

"Good," said he; "aught else?"

"Nothing, save that you might depend upon this as authentic, and that he would wait on you on the day you entered New Orleans at the head of your troops."

After a little more questioning the General appeared satisfied, and ordered that Sebastian should be given refreshment and permitted to leave.

Once more Lola's brother bent his steps towards New Orleans. He had not yet completed his task, he thought to himself. There were yet those papers he carried to be delivered into the hands of the disguised Yankee on the steps of the St. Charles Hotel.

He dreamed not of the treachery Varley Fang meditated towards him, nor that the supposed Yankee who would address him would prove to be no other than the Provost Marshal of the rebel troops in New Orleans.

So, not without much danger, toil, and suffering, he made his way back to New Orleans, a distance of full seventy miles, on foot, and arrived there on the day the Yankee fleet had taken up a position so as entirely to command the city.

On the first evening no one appeared on the steps of the St. Charles to give the agreed countersign. But on the second a tall, dark man, in a military cloak, approached him after eyeing him intently for a moment or two.

Sebastian felt sure it was he whom he had been told to expect, and his heart leaped high at the thought that now he had faithfully carried out his instructions. The panic in the city, and the presence of the Yankee fleet, attested what a tremendous blow he had been instrumental in striking in favour of the Yankees.

Perhaps those papers he was now about to deliver would put the *coup de grace* on the now desponding and astounded rebels. Perhaps it would be by his hand that the most tremendous disaster should be caused to fall on the hated slave Confederacy.

With these thoughts rife in his mind he boldly confronted the stranger.

"Washington!" said the latter.

"Baltimore!" was his prompt reply.

"Ha! you have some papers?"

Sebastian produced the packet given him by Varley Fang, which the other hastily snatched from his hand, tore open, and commenced rapidly to examine. After a short time he produced a silver whistle, and blew thereon a low note.

Quickly half a dozen rough-looking, gaunt, and dirty soldiers hurried up.

"Seize this fellow!" cried the stranger. "He is a cursed spy, and has been concerned in treacherously affording the enemy a passage. Take him to the guard-house, while I communicate with the General as to when he is to be executed."

All protestations on the part of Sebastian would have been vain. He knew that he had been betrayed, and that this man was no Yankee in disguise, but that dreaded functionary in all armies—the Provost Marshal.

Still Sebastian did not suspect Varley Fang of having betrayed him, but imagined that the rebels had by other means acquired a knowledge of the plot.

"They will hang me," he muttered, very pale and with clenched teeth—"they will hang me, but they can't save their accursed city!"

He was dragged off to prison to await his fate, where for the moment we will leave him.

Be it observed that at this time, although the fleet

under Admiral Farragut lay in the river, the city had not yet capitulated. But General Lee had resolved to evacuate it, and already orders were given for all the troops to be ready to march out from doomed New Orleans.

CHAPTER LV

SEBASTIAN IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH.

AND what of Lola—brave and gentle, passionate and lovely Lola—Hubert Glynne's one time slave, and now the warm friend of his sister? We left her just as she started for Washington, where lay Hubert Glynne a wounded prisoner, hoping to comfort him in his captivity, perhaps procure his release.

Amply provided with money, earnest in purpose, urged as she thought by gratitude and affection for Maude Glynne, Lola spared neither expense nor fatigue to herself, and by good fortune arrived safe in the capital in a much shorter time than she could have calculated upon.

Though almost worn out, she immediately made inquiries as to Hubert Glynne.

Alas! she had come too late. Hubert Glynne had been liberated at an exchange of prisoners which took place two days previously, and, though weak and ill, had at once started off, as it was supposed, back to New Orleans.

According to the terms of the *cartel*, prisoners on either side were to be permitted a free passage through the enemy's lines to any place they chose, and Colonel Glynne had openly announced his intention of returning to New Orleans.

He was quite unfit for active service, and would be for some long time. Indeed, the probability was he would never be able to draw his sword again.

This Lola learned from the surgeon who attended the prisoners.

What was to be done now?

Hasten back to New Orleans, whither he had

probability gone, and take the news of his release to his sister, if she did not meet himself in person.

So Lola, after a very brief stay in Washington—merely enough to recruit exhausted nature—started on her weary journey back to New Orleans.

Hope, however, buoyed her up and sustained her spirits.

“Hubert Glynne was free,” she repeated again and again to herself; “wounded and ill, it was true, but, with careful nursing, would doubtless recover—and ah! how tenderly would not Maude Glynne and she nurse and tend him!”

* * * * *

And again Lola arrives in New Orleans.

But what a change has taken place in the proud Crescent City since last she was in its streets!

Before she knew what was the matter, she could perceive that events of great importance were in progress. The people—that is to say, the women and old men—seemed panic-stricken, while a sullen joy illumined the dark faces of the negroes.

At various places columns of smoke could be seen arising to heaven, and soon Lola learned that the Yankee fleet was in the river, and that the inhabitants were destroying all property they could not remove.

Without waiting to gather particulars, she hurried towards the house of Maude Glynne. Business was entirely suspended—no hack cabs were in the streets—the stores were all closed—the church bells rang out the alarm, and altogether an indescribable scene of terror and confusion prevailed.

She had to pass through Jackson Square to reach the abode of Maude Glynne.

Drawn up on one side of the square, around a bare and gaunt-looking tree, was a small body of soldiers, gloomy-looking and stern men. She saw among them some officers, and, thinking she recognized one, she hurried up, intending to ask if Miss Glynne had removed from her house.

When she got close, she perceived a man pinioned, standing beneath the tree, from which depended a halter.

An officer was reading out from a paper he held.

At once she comprehended the scene.

It was an execution, and the officer was reading out the sentence ere the criminal should be executed.

Lola paused, and was about to retreat shudderingly from the dreadful scene, when she heard her name.

"Lola!"

It was the condemned man who spoke.

She recognized the voice, and the next instant the features, as those of her brother Sebastian.

A piercing shriek burst from her, and, rushing forward, she endeavoured to reach him.

She was roughly and sternly repulsed, however, by the soldiers.

"Keep that woman back," said the officer, sternly. "Justice must be done."

"Mercy! mercy! spare him!" cried Lola, throwing herself on her knees. "You cannot be so cruel, so wicked, as to hang my brother!"

The soldiers still kept her back, and the officer finished reading the sentence.

These were the concluding words—

"The sentence of the court is that you be immediately hanged as a traitor and a spy, and your body left unburied."

Lola heard the words, and again shrieked aloud in the agony of her heart.

CHAPTER LVI.

LOLA AND HER CONDEMNED BROTHER.

SOME of the soldiers who guarded the condemned prisoner showed signs of being moved by the tears, entreaties, and frantic grief of the unhappy girl.

The officer, however, to whom belonged the duty of seeing the sentence carried out, remained calm, stern, and immovable.

His eye rested for a moment on the girl kneeling at his feet, pleading so hard for her brother's life, and a shade of pity came over his face. It was but for a moment, however; the next, and remembering his duty, he said—

"Remove this girl. The sentence must be carried out."

Two soldiers advanced gently, and one placed his hand on her shoulder.

"We must do our duty, young woman."

Instantly the girl started to her feet, and, giving a despairing glance around, again addressed the officer in command.

With clasped hands, imploring eyes, and impassioned voice, she pleaded for mercy—at all events for delay—using all the eloquence of which she was capable.

"It cannot be, young woman. The sentence of the court is immediate death by hanging, and it is my duty to carry it out. So again I must request you to withdraw. I wish not to harrow your feelings by permitting you to witness the sight; once more I repeat, the sentence must and shall be carried out."

Wildly she gazed around, and sought among the faces of the other officers for one from which she might hope for mercy.

In vain.

"At least," she gasped, "let me bid my unhappy brother farewell. Let me have a few words with him in private."

The officer hesitated.

It seemed hard to deny a sister a few moments with a brother who stood on the confines of eternity.

"You cannot, you will not, surely refuse me that boon."

"I will give you five minutes," was the laconic reply.

And as he spoke the officer waved back the two soldiers who stood closest to the culprit, and Lola was permitted to approach.

"Sebastian, my brother, wherefore do I see you in this terrible position? Tell me all, and then, desperate as the case is, I may perhaps procure delay. Of what are you accused?"

"Treason to this Confederacy, I believe."

"Of what nature? You are innocent—you have not been so mad as to commit yourself again by stirring up or aiding in rebellion?"

"I have been so mad, and, I thank the Lord, so successful, as to have been an agent by which this city will fall to the Yankees."

"You have been concerned in this, and have been detected? Alas! then there is but little hope."

"Yes, Lola, I glory in it, and the thought gives me courage to meet death. I, Sebastian Velasco, was the bearer of a message to General Butler, to the effect that certain obstructions in the river which barred the progress of the fleet would, on a certain night, at a certain hour, be blown up. I took the message in safety; but on my return, by some treachery, was arrested on the steps of the St. Charles Hotel. I was told to give a certain packet of papers to an officer who would accost me, and make himself known by a certain pass-word, to which I had the counter-sign. I was led to expect that this man would be a Yankee disguised in rebel uniform. I was deceived. It was the Provost Marshal of the Confederate force in this city. I was immediately seized, lodged in gaol, and this afternoon tried by court-martial."

"Know you by whom you were betrayed?"

"No."

"Who gave you the packet of papers?"

"One who is at least a bitter enemy of the accursed planters."

"His name?"

"Varley Fang."

A cry escaped from Lola. It was as she had feared. Something—a sort of presentiment—whispered to her that her bitter and implacable enemy, Fang, was concerned in this.

"Alas!" she cried, "then there is indeed no hope. He would take care that the papers should be of such a nature as to insure your condemnation. Unhappy brother! You have been betrayed to your death by that accursed, that deep-dyed traitor."

"Ha! if I thought so I would rescind my refusal, and tell all I know of the plot, and the share he had in it."

"Yes, yes; it may save your life."

Then, turning to the officer, who stood a few paces off, so as not to intrude on this last interview between brother and sister, she cried—

"Sir, I beg you will at least cause the execution to be delayed. My brother has revelations to make—is willing

to tell all he knows as to the authors of the treason of which he was only an innocent agent."

"Young woman, it is useless. This attempt to gain time is excusable by reason of your relationship to the condemned; but it would be inexcusable on my part to give any delay in carrying out the sentence. The five minutes have expired. Withdraw."

"Hear me, gentlemen—officers and soldiers—listen to my words. I hereby proclaim my unhappy brother's innocence. He has been beguiled into this fatal affair by the most consummate traitor and scoundrel who ever trod God's earth. Varley Fang is that man; and my brother here has such information as will quickly convince you all."

Lola waited with breathless eagerness for the effect which this appeal might have. The officer in command seemed moved and agitated, as though scarce knowing what to do. The mention of Varley Fang's name had produced an obvious effect. Several officers muttered together, and a murmur ran round among the soldiers at the mention of this name. Varley Fang was well known, and already it was current talk in New Orleans that he had been guilty of a gigantic treason.

Thanks to the Englishman, Captain George, his transactions at the sailors' boarding-house had since then been investigated, and the proprietor—the man Oliver—had been forced into a confession of Fang's having used his house as a dépôt for barrels of gunpowder and other articles, which presumed pointed to his being engaged in some conspiracy. Oliver, however, protested his ignorance of the use to which Mr. Fang designed to put these things, and declared that, knowing Fang, and believing him, as did most others, to be loyal to the Confederacy, he did not suspect any harm.

The man narrowly escaped, but as there was no proof of his complicity, and indeed but little of the other being engaged in a plot, he was allowed to go free.

Since then, however, there had arisen fresh rumours—the explosion by which the obstruction barring the passage of the river had been destroyed was at first looked upon as an unfortunate accident, but several facts which had

subsequently cropped up pointed unmistakeably to treason somewhere.

Varley Fang had for some days been missed from New Orleans, and there were other circumstances, not least among which were the vehement denunciations of Captain George, which pointed to him as the traitor.

So the mention of the name of this man, looked on as he was by so many with dislike and suspicion, excited great interest and curiosity.

Still, however, the orders for the immediate execution of the condemned man were distinct and peremptory. Although many present felt inclined to suggest at least a postponement, none cared to take on himself the office of proposing it.

The officer in command glanced quickly round, and saw only anxious, curious faces. There was no sufficient reason for delay in face of his distinct instructions.

Lola stood, with clasped hands, awaiting in desperate anxiety the effect of her words.

The prisoner stood undauntedly, with the rope around his neck, as though prepared to meet his fate defiantly.

None could deny that he bore himself right well and as a brave man in this terrible hour.

Perhaps it was this which, more than anything, influenced the stern soldiers to wish that at least his execution might be postponed for a little while.

But no word to that effect was uttered; and the decisive words of the officer in command fell like a knell on the ears of the unhappy girl.

"The sentence must be carried out at once. Remove the girl!"

Lola threw herself on her knees in this dreadful extremity.

"Oh, God of Heaven! God of mercy! God of the proud planter and the poor slave! look down and have pity on this unhappy boy!"

Her voice, clear, resonant, and thrilling, arose to Heaven, its agonised, wailing tone filling all hearts with pity.

"Remove the girl!" said the officer again, sternly, but with a huskiness in his voice which told that he deeply felt the tragic nature of the situation.

As some of the guards again advanced to the kneeling girl, she started to her feet, her whole frame trembling with excitement.

"That voice! that voice! I cannot be mistaken; Heaven has heard my prayer!"

Men looked in each other's faces blankly. No voice had been heard.

"Poor girl, she raves. The terrible excitement has been too much for her. Remove her, men, at once, but gently."

"Come, my girl, this is no place for you," said a young officer, advancing and taking her hand; "let me take you away."

"No, no!" she cried, as she started up; "I know that the Lord has hearkened to my prayer. I heard the voice of Hubert Glynne; and there I see him coming."

She pointed with her hand to a troop of horsemen who were riding slowly along one side of the square. It was not a troop or escort of cavalry soldiers, for they rode in no sort of order, but apparently a number of gentlemen and officers riding together.

Her hearing, to have distinguished the voice of any one, must have been almost preternaturally acute, as must her eyesight.

All gazed towards the horsemen in silent surprise, till presently one burst out—

"By thunder, there is Hubert Glynne!"

CHAPTER LVII.

HUBERT GLYNNE TO THE RESCUE.

It was indeed Hubert Glynne, who, with some dozen others, rode slowly along one side of Jackson Square.

Weary from a long journey, ill from imprisonment and privation, sore from unhealed wounds, the return of Hubert Glynne to his native city was a day of bitter misery and humiliation.

He had been among those who most strenuously denied

the possibility of the Yankees ever achieving the capture of the Crescent City. He believed in the impregnability of the forts, and relied on the strength of the obstructions to delay the fleet for such a time under the fire of the heavy cannon as must prove their destruction.

And now, when he rode again into the town, after captivity in a Northern prison, he beheld a Yankee fleet moored off the Levée. He was so ill and worn out as to be scarcely able to sit his horse, and as he rode slowly up to the group of soldiers and officers assembled around the condemned prisoner, they could see that he swayed to and fro in his saddle. His face was pale, excepting a red flush on either cheek, and his eyes, too, blazed with unnatural light. His tall frame was now gaunt and long, and few would have recognized in the hollow-eyed, bowed-down horseman, the one time gay, handsome, and gallant Hubert Glynne.

Lola had reached New Orleans before him, although he had the start, from the fact that several times on the road he was compelled to halt for a day by reason of illness. More than once he had been delirious, and only his strong will and earnest desire to get back could have sustained him.

Immediately on arriving in the outskirts of the city he learned the fatal news. At first he was inclined to doubt it as almost too incredible, but the columns of black smoke, caused by the burning cotton, destroyed lest it should fall into the enemy's hands, the crowds of people hastening from the doomed city, and the last unanswerable demonstration—the presence of the Federal ships in the river—told him that for the present all was lost.

He had ridden hard, and horse and rider were alike well nigh knocked up, when he arrived at the door of his residence in New Orleans. Dismounting, he hurried in, and found there his sister Maude and Captain George, who had hastened, on hearing that the city was to be surrendered, to know what were her intentions, and to offer his services. Maude, after a little consideration, had decided to remain, and Captain George was about taking his leave of her, previous to his own departure with the troops, under General Snell, when the arrival of Hubert Glynne surprised them.

Maude at once ran, threw herself into his burst into tears.

"Oh! my brother, that you should arrive at such a time!"

"Maude, it is the fortune of war. We must hope for the best. I know all—that the city is to be abandoned,—to be surrendered to the enemy. I meet at every step too sure evidence of the fact. And you, Maude, what will you do?"

"I will do as you wish. A few moments back I had announced to this gentleman my intention of remaining. Women and children would be but an incumbrance, and the general in command has signified as much."

"I will talk with my friend here, Maude, for a few moments, and let you know on what we have decided."

"Dear brother, how pale and ill you look! Will you not rest awhile, or take some refreshment?"

"Rest!"—and Hubert Glynne laughed bitterly—"Rest, Maude! with a Yankee fleet lying at anchor within gunshot—Rest! in face of this disaster—Rest! when every fighting man and boy capable of bearing arms should place himself at his country's service—Rest! I say no; I will never rest till in my grave, or utterly incapable of serving against the hated enemy. Rest!—my rest may be that of many a brave soldier—a rest on the battle-field."

His manner was wild and excited, his face flushed, and his eye bore witness to the fact that he was almost in a state of fever.

"Dear brother, pray be reasonable."

"Maude!" he interrupted sharply, "it is useless your persuading me against what is alike my duty and my inclination. So long as I can stand and wield a sword, so long will I do battle against my country's foes. Come, retire for a few minutes, I beg; I wish to hear minutely all that has occurred from this gentleman, and consult with him. Then I will let you know what I propose, and what I shall do."

Maude Glynne withdrew, sorrowfully enough. She saw that it was useless to attempt persuasion of any kind in his then mood.

In a few words Captain George told him all that had happened, not forgetting the fact that it was now certain there

had been some treachery at work, and his suspicion, amounting in his own mind almost to a certainty, that Varley Fang was the traitor. For although the latter had contrived to elude him ultimately, he had been closely watched by the Englishman, and it was through him that the transactions at Oliver's boarding-house were brought to light.

Fang, however, was not to be found. He was too cautious to risk himself in New Orleans until the town was absolutely garrisoned by the Yankee troops.

Hubert Glynne, after his sister had left them together, threw himself into a chair, and for a moment or two rested his head on his hand.

"Give me a drop of brandy from your flask, old fellow; I'm almost dead licked. I've ridden hard, and spared neither myself nor horse; and now to find things like this!"

"You are excited and feverish, Hubert," said Captain George, taking his hand; "if you would take a few hours rest—"

"Rest!—nonsense; how can I rest? You know as well as I do that we must all be out of the city at once—at least all who mean to fight on, as I do."

"At any rate, brandy can do you no good—it will only make you more feverish."

"It will have the effect I wish—supply a temporary stimulus, and keep off this drowsy delirium which oppresses me."

Captain George said no more, but handed the flask to his friend, who took a deep draught.

"And now, old boy, what is to be done?"

"We must leave here, I suppose."

"Unless we mean to be made prisoners of war. Do you know what are the plans of the general in command?"

"To get the troops safe out, and leave the city to its fate. It is a sad necessity."

"Yes, yes, a necessity—there is no help for it. And now for ourselves!" cried Hubert, starting up as though endowed with fresh strength and energy. "Let us be doing. Come, we will go and collect all of our fellows we can—I mean those unattached to any regiment, especially our brothers of the Fiery Cross."

"Ah! that reminds me," said Captain George, "of the girl Lola, whom you asked me to watch over and protect. Poor girl, she needed all the help I could give her—for, remember, you scarcely believed that Varley Fang had designs against her."

"And had he?"

"Well, he caused her to be kidnapped, and carried to his place up the river."

"The accursed scoundrel! he shall answer to me for this some day."

"I reckon," said George, "you will not see much more of him—I've been watching him pretty close. He won't show his nose in New Orleans till our fellows have gone, and the Yankee flag is flying in place of the 'Stars and Bars.'"

"And what of the girl, Lola?"

"Lola—have you not seen her?"

"No. How should I?"

"She started some time ago for Washington to come to you."

"Ah! then she must have arrived shortly after I was exchanged. I owe her a deep debt of gratitude, and my heart smites me with regard to her. Now tell me all you know concerning her and this villain, Varley Fang."

The Englishman quickly put him in possession of all he himself knew of the abduction of Lola and her subsequent rescue.

"The accursed ruffian," cried Hubert Glynne, savagely. "On the day I meet him face to face he shall bite the dust. I mean it. And what of the girl, Lola? Where is she?"

"I cannot say. Doubtless, she found when she arrived at Washington that you had been exchanged and released. I imagine she would make the best of her way back here."

"Come," cried Hubert, impatiently, "it is time we were up and moving."

In a few moments both were in the saddle, and in less than an hour were riding through Jackson Square, in company with some dozen others, all unattached, or members of the Society of the Fiery Cross.

Hubert Glynne grew manifestly worse instead of better, and as he rode along, his form rocking to and fro in the saddle, his bloodshot eyes, and face, now flushed, now deadly pale, told a tale.

The girl Lola had heard his voice, for he endeavoured to conceal the serious nature of his illness by talking to Captain George, who rode on his right hand. The Englishman observed the company of soldiers around the tree in Jackson Square, beneath which stood Sebastian Velasco, although to Hubert the whole scene was but a cloudy vision.

But when Captain George, recognizing the girl, gave vent to the exclamation, "By Heavens! there is Lola herself on her knees; surely they cannot be ill-treating her,"—then Hubert Glynne seemed to rouse up from the stupor into which he had fallen—a stupor which betrayed itself in his speech, as he endeavoured to talk on, scarce knowing what he was saying—in his heavy, bloodshot eyes—in his swaying to and fro, and many other signs.

"Lola!" he cried, suddenly sitting bolt upright in his saddle, and glancing before him. "Where?—ah! I see her now. What does all this mean? A man with a rope round his neck—a file of soldiers! By Heavens! it is an execution. Methinks," he added, bitterly, "they would have done better to keep the Yankees out than hang them when they have got in. I suppose this is a Yankee spy. Come let us ride up and see."

* * * * *

The arrival of Hubert Glynne and his party caused quite a change in the position of affairs.

The girl Lola ran up to him, clinging to his saddle with the one hand, pointing the other to Sebastian—

"I heard your voice. I saw you. Heaven has heard my prayer. Save him! He is unjustly condemned, through the wicked schemes of that scoundrel, Varley Fang!"

"What is all this?" asked Hubert Glynne, who had suddenly grown quite collected, and spoke and acted as well as ever.

The officer in charge stepped forward,—

"It is an execution, Colonel Glynne. This man has

been condemned by court-martial, and the carrying out of the sentence has been entrusted to me."

"What is his crime?"

"Treason."

"Treason, into which he was beguiled by the arch-traitor Fang!" cried Lola, passionately. "At least give time. All I ask is a little delay; my brother has revelations and disclosures to make, which deeply affect you all. I say that he was beguiled into this, and that for your own sakes you should at least wait and learn from his lips all the particulars of the plot by which this poor city has been delivered into the hands of the Yankees."

"The girl speaks well, and to the purpose. If at the last moment this man asserts that he has revelations to make, his execution should be delayed. What say you, gentlemen all? Do I speak aright?"

Hubert, as he asked the question, rose in his saddle and looked around among his immediate friends.

A murmur of assent arose.

The officer to whom was entrusted the task of carrying out the sentence paused to consider a moment or two before speaking.

"My orders are precise, and without stronger reason than I see now I must and will carry them out. The prisoner must be executed forthwith."

A faint scream broke from Lola as she heard this decision.

"Then, sir," said Hubert Glynne, "I will furnish you with the stronger reason you require. Gentlemen all, I call upon you for your assistance. I think it wise and needful in the interest of the Confederacy that this man's execution be postponed until the general commanding has been communicated with."

"I must protest against this interference with the execution of my duty."

"Sir, I will take the responsibility."

"Your warrant, sir?"

"I am Colonel Glynne, and will take the responsibility. It must be as I say. Gentlemen—all you who are members of the Fiery Cross will stand to me in this matter. I call upon you all to aid me in staying this

man's execution until the general has been communicated with."

The mention of the mystic society, the Order of the Fiery Cross, seldom failed to elicit a certain amount of enthusiasm, even on the part of those who were not members.

It was so on this occasion.

"The Fiery Cross!"

"The Fiery Cross!" was heard on all hands, and even the soldiers were disinclined to carry out the sentence.

"Sir, this interference with my duty is unprecedented. I submit, but hold you responsible."

"I freely accept the responsibility. Where is the general in command to be found?"

"General Snell is in New Orleans, arranging for the evacuation by the troops, which is to take place to-day."

"Good! Will one of you fellows ride off to him, and inform him that a prisoner condemned to death has important revelations to make, which may seriously affect the future of the Confederacy?"

"I will go," cried Captain George; and instantly he galloped off on his errand.

"Gentlemen, stand to me, please," cried Hubert Glynne, rising in his stirrups and addressing those around him. "In what I am doing I am thoroughly justified. Sir," turning to the officer, "I will be responsible for the safety of the prisoner. Soldiers," to the men, "you know me, some of you. I pledge my word you shall be held harmless for this affair. Hand the prisoner over to my custody."

It was soon sufficiently obvious that the men were inclined to hearken to Hubert Glynne rather than to their officer, even if he had insisted. Without waiting for further orders, one of them took the noose off the neck of the condemned man, and led him up to Hubert Glynne.

"Here you are, Colonel. For me, I'm glad to be rid of the job. I don't mind shooting a man in battle in hot blood; but as for hangman's work, can't say as I hankers arter it."

The officer acquiesced in the inevitable with the best grace possible. Doubtless if he had spoken his thoughts,

he would have owned that he too was not heartily sorry at the turn affairs had taken.

Hubert Glynne was well known and deservedly popular. He was surrounded by more than a dozen friends, determined men, well armed and mounted; and besides, the soldiers told off as the execution party could certainly not be depended upon in case the affair grew serious.

The mention of the Fiery Cross, about which society there hung a veil of mystery, and the power and influence of which had been painted in glowing colours, had a very great effect.

Now, that for a time at least, the sentence had been postponed, the fortitude of the prisoner gave way. He had nerved himself to die defiantly, and glorying in the success of his treason as they called it.

He trembled now that there was a prospect of his being spared the terrible death which a few moments before stared him in the face; and stood abashed and ashamed before his former master, who had twice spared his life.

"After all," was the thought which forced itself on his mind, "it is possible to be a planter, a slave-owner, and yet be a brave and noble man."

Lola, too, was all but overcome by the terrible excitement of the last few minutes. She clung to the saddle of Hubert Glynne, and he had to support her with his arm to prevent her from falling.

As for Hubert himself, he seemed to rise to the situation. His weary limbs appeared to grow strong and vigorous; his dull eyes to be lighted with fresh fire; his whole body to be animated with fresh vigour.

"Now, my lad, tell me all you know about this affair—the truth, and the whole truth—as you value your life. I forgive you freely for all you may have done or designed against me. For your sister's sake I will save you, if possible. Speak quickly, and to the purpose."

"Yes, speak, Sebastian; but let your first words be of gratitude to Hubert Glynne, brave and noble-hearted, who can forget the evil you attempted, and save your life."

Sebastian was quite overcome, and, dropping one knee, raised the hand of his former master; still his master, indeed, by the laws of the Confederate States.

"Sir—Mr. Glynne—I did not think it would ever come to this. If I escape now, and if at any time you demand my life from me, I will freely render it up."

"That will do, my lad. Now, tell me quickly all you know of this affair."

Sebastian obeyed; and as his master listened his brow grew dark.

"You richly deserve death," he said, slowly.

"Say not so! have mercy—do not pause in your good work," Lola pleaded, passionately.

"I will not; for your sake, Lola, I will save this wretched boy from the penalty of his crime. I must take the blame on myself. No matter—here, boy, come with me. Ho, there! two of you fellows bind the prisoner's hands."

Both Lola and Sebastian divined that this was for a blind, and that Hubert meant to let him escape.

"Sir, I will be responsible for the prisoner. Come with me, one of you; I have a cellar beneath my house from which the devil himself could not escape."

No resistance was offered. When the officer in command and the soldiers under him had allowed the condemned man to be taken from their custody, they relieved themselves of all anxiety concerning the prisoner, the officer accepting Hubert Glynne's proposition of assuming all responsibility.

Once within his house, Hubert took Sebastian down into the basement, whence there led a passage by a flight of steps to the back yard.

"Now go, make the best of your way. There is a small gate from the yard, which takes you out into a bye street. Be cautious; if you are captured you will certainly be hung. I can do more."

Then, without waiting to listen to the heartfelt protestations of gratitude which the rescued prisoner was pouring forth, Hubert Glynne returned.

The girl Lola met him as he ascended the stairs.

"Hubert Glynne, you are a brave man—a good man. May the blessings of the Almighty alight on you—may you know happiness and peace—may everything you undertake prosper—may you never again experience trouble or pain."

"Lola," he said, sadly, "I thank you for your good wishes. I have often thought of you during my captivity, and have reproached myself for my ingratitude, and am indeed glad I have been able to make some little reparation."

Her breast heaved with emotion—her eyes grew dim—her limbs seemed to fail her; she tottered forward, and with a sound, half sob, half murmur, breaking from her, she fell half senseless into his arms.

The situation was a peculiar one. The girl was beautiful, and Hubert could not be insensible thereto, nor to the fact that the gratitude she bore him trenched very nearly on a warmer feeling.

Had not times been so turbulent and critical, were not duty in the way, he might—probably would—have indulged at the least in a little love making. As it was, he kissed the girl's lips once—only once—and then gently unwound her arms from around his neck.

"Lola, I must go now; farewell! Go to my sister; and do not forget that I shall ever think of you with gratitude."

"Gratitude?"

"Lola, I must go; I cannot trust myself longer with you."

"Farewell!" she murmured, and, tears rising to her eyes, she turned sadly away.

Urged, it would seem, by a sudden and irresistible impulse, he all at once started forward, caught her in his arms, kissed her once more, and murmured in her ear the words—

"Lola, I love you!"

The next moment Hubert Glynne was gone, and Lola stood alone, his voice still ringing in her ears, and the memory of his last words thrilling in her heart.

CHAPTER LVIII.

LOLA BEFORE GENERAL BUTLER.

HUBERT GLYNNE suddenly and mysteriously disappeared. Lola remained with Maude Glynne; and, though both

of them made diligent inquiries, nothing could be heard of him.

A week later there came terrible news—news which, at first, neither would believe, but which alas, turned out to be too true.

Hubert Glynne had ridden boldly into New Orleans, and though the town was in possession of the Yankees, and there were numbers of Federal troops about, had deliberately ridden down to the flagstaff on the Levée, and had hauled down the Yankee flag, the Stars and Stripes, in the presence of a great crowd, and had trampled it in the mud.

He was seized, conveyed before General Butler, and condemned to death.

This was no time to inquire what he meant by so insane and extraordinary an act. He was condemned to die, and both the girls aroused themselves from the stupor of grief into which the news had plunged them, and resolved to strain every nerve to save him.

"I will go to General Butler and beg for his life," said Lola. "I, as a slave, may command more attention than you, as I may be supposed to be friendly to the Yankees."

In an hour's time Lola stood before Benjamin Butler, the tyrant of New Orleans, humbly praying for her late master's life.

She had not been there a minute ere another figure glided into the room and stood behind the general's chair.

She shuddered as she recognized her deadly enemy, Varley Fang.

CHAPTER LIX.

WHAT LED TO HUBERT GLYNNE'S RASH ACT.

WHAT could have induced Hubert Glynne to commit so mad and foolish an act—an act almost absolutely certain to lead to his destruction?

His sister Maude and Lola had again and again asked themselves this question.

There was evidently some deep mystery about the whole affair.

After he had given Lola's brother Sebastian a chance to escape—a chance which he happily availed himself of—and had bidden farewell to Lola, he suddenly disappeared, and no one, not even his most intimate friends, knew whither or why he had gone.

The explanation is a simple one.

Hubert Glynne had suffered intensely from his unhealed wound and general fever during his long and painful journey from the North. Several times it seemed that he must succumb, but was enabled to bear up through his determined nature, strong frame and constitution, and, above all, by his great desire to reach New Orleans.

Strange forebodings oppressed him. These he was unable to reduce to definite shape, but they related principally to his sister Maude and Lola.

During the whole scene in the square, his head throbbed and his whole body was in a burning glow; his sight at times grew dim, and violent tremors shook him. Still, however, he, by great effort, mastered his bodily weakness by an exercise of mental strength and power of will of which few would have been capable.

He felt, he knew, that the girl had saved not only his life, but perhaps the life and honour of his sister by her timely warning; and, reproaching himself, as he had many times, with not having evinced sufficient gratitude to his beautiful slave, he considered himself bound in honour to save her brother from a felon's death.

This he determined the instant he comprehended the meaning of the scene, and would not even have stood at force to gain his object, trusting that his known loyalty, his services to the Confederacy, would prove sufficient excuse.

But the excitement served but to increase the fierce fever which burned in his brain; and though it was kept under, it smouldered, and was ready to burst forth into a blaze at any moment.

Alone with Lola, after giving her brother so excellent a chance for his life, his eye met her grateful, loving glance with one of passionate adoration. The girl was beautiful, and his heated fancy magnified her charms of face and

person. His heart beat fast, and his face flushed, as he gazed on this girl, who he knew loved him—had already done him most excellent service, and whom he had repaid by once sparing and once absolutely saving her brother's life.

There was an exchange of services rendered—a community between them; and despite the difference in their station, his own wounded condition, and the disastrous position of affairs at New Orleans, Hubert Glynne felt tempted to clasp her in his arms—felt as though he could relinquish everything—fame, honour, duty—all, for the love of Lola.

But this feeling was evanescent, and, as he considered his own thoughts, he felt ashamed of his weakness.

But the words had been spoken—

“Lola, I love you!”

They thrilled on her soul like heavenly music, and long after he was gone she stood as one entranced, muttering to herself, “He loves me! he loves me!”

Hubert, when he hurried away, was in a strange mood. Mingled with the deep passion which, suddenly sweeping tempest-like over his soul, had urged him to speak the rash words, was a feeling of contempt and anger at himself for giving way at such a time.

So, vexed with himself, and yet unable to drive from his thoughts the memory of Lola, as she stood a moment before him, ravishing in her beauty, he mounted his horse and rode off: whither, he did not consider: the necessity, however, of deciding on some course was forced on him by his own state.

The fever, which had been for a time, as it were, smothered, now that the excitement was over, burst into flame. He felt himself growing dizzy, and strange cloud-like visions floated before his eyes. Then he knew that he must take some immediate steps, ere delirium, which already threatened, should render him helpless.

Now it happened that there lived in the outskirts of the city, in the dirtiest and poorest part of the French Creole quarter, an old doctor—half Frenchman, half Indian, with a dash of mulatto blood.

He was called Doctor Peto, and his fame for skill in the treatment of fevers, and such like ailments, was great.

Hubert Glynn had before experienced his skill, and as he himself knew enough of medicine to be aware that if not treated in time he would shortly be all but unconscious, he resolved to seek out this doctor, hear his opinion, take some powerful medicine, and, if it were absolutely and imperatively necessary, lay up for a day or two.

But where?

That was the question. Though he clung to the hope that the city might be saved with desperate tenacity, he knew there was a possibility of its being surrendered, now that the Yankees had passed the forts.

A thought struck him. He would search out the old doctor, and if he must succumb for a day or two, he would hasten back to the old plantation, where was an old negress and one or two other house hands, on whom he could thoroughly depend. The old woman had nursed him as a child, and loved him as a mother; so that whatever befell he felt sure he would be safe in her care.

He intended, however, to ride back to New Orleans, and inform his sister, and also Captain George and his other friends, of his intention.

Perhaps he would be unable to ride, in which case he must get a carriage.

His ailment was of an intermittent nature, and after a quarter of an hour's violent attack of fever, during which at times he could scarce sit his horse, he recovered himself slightly, and found that he had taken the wrong road, and had got to the outskirts of the city, too near the Levée and river. There were only a few scattered huts, on either side of the unimportant road, at wide intervals, and these were fewer as he went on. Had he gone half a mile further he would have been quite clear of New Orleans, and struck the Levée grand road.

So he turned his horse sharply, and with an exclamation of impatience proceeded to retrace his steps. As he did so he noticed a horseman some hundred yards in the rear, who also abruptly wheeled round.

Although the other turned too quickly for him to see his face, there was something in his figure which seemed familiar.

The fever had sharpened his faculties, his nerves being

highly strung, and in the interval between the paroxysms both hearing and sight were preternaturally clear and acute.

"Varley Fang, by heavens!" he cried; and the more he looked the more certain he felt that he was right in his conjecture.

He remembered what Lola had said as to Fang having betrayed her brother to his destruction, and now regretted he had not questioned Sebastian. But, like lightning's flash, he remembered that he saw before him the man whom he now knew had been plotting against his sister and Lola—the man who had abducted the girl he loved, and had committed, doubtless, many other crimes.

To think and act, with Hubert Glynne were synonymous. So he drove his spurs into the flanks of his jaded horse, and rode on towards the other horseman.

But it seemed that he did not wish to be overtaken; for, after a rapid glance behind him, he, too, spurred his horse and galloped on faster. Hubert urged his horse to his utmost, and, jaded as his beast was, began to gain on the other. They rode on thus for nearly half a mile, Hubert Glynne slowly gaining. Shortly, at the pace they were going, they would reach the skirts of the city, and already the pursuer shouted to the other to stop, looking keenly ahead the while to see if he could discern any Confederate soldiers on the road.

In such a case, he would have shouted to them to stop the man whom he was in pursuit.

Varley Fang—for it was indeed he—evidently did not mean to ride into the city, nor to be overtaken either, if he could help it. As they passed a narrow swampy lane leading between two rows of wretched negro huts, he suddenly turned short to the right. Hubert Glynne set his teeth and drew his revolver. There was not more than fifty yards between them, and a lucky shot might easily wound man or horse. He fired just as Varley Fang swept round the sharp corner. The next instant he disappeared; so that it was impossible to know the result of the shot.

When Hubert, however, gained the corner, he saw the man he was pursuing riding on, evidently unhurt as regarded himself or horse; for he was erect, and had so quickened his speed as to increase the distance.

Hubert levelled his pistol, but the last barrel had been discharged.

So he again urged his horse in pursuit, and felt for the hilt of his sabre.

"By thunder! I'll run him through the body as I would a skunk when I catch him," he muttered, growing furious at the protracted chase.

Once more Varley Fang turned short to the right—this time not down any lane or road, but between two huts and across a piece of waste ground.

He now headed again for the road they had left; only he was riding in an oblique direction, as if intending to go down the river and away from the town, as he and Hubert both had been when the latter turned and caused Fang to do so likewise.

"Ah!" Hubert muttered between his teeth; "the sneaking scoundrel! I guess he's making away down river in hopes of falling in with some Yankee troops or marines landed from the ships."

Hubert Glynne's horse, though worn and jaded, was a large and powerful one, with great length of stride; and when pursuer and pursued again struck the road—which, in comparison with the ground they had just traversed, was hard and firm—he rapidly began to gain.

Varley Fang, looking over his shoulder, saw this, and at once rode off from the road into a swampy morass to the left. Here Glynne's horse was at a disadvantage, and the lighter one Fang bestrode increased the distance between them each moment.

Still, however, Hubert, by dint of spurring and constantly urging on his horse, managed to keep him in view, and at times, when the ground was a little firmer, gained a few yards.

The chase had now lasted half an hour, and again they were galloping over firm ground.

It is probable that the pursuer would in a few minutes have caught up with the other, had his horse not suddenly stumbled and fallen, throwing the rider over his head.

Fortunately, the ground was not hard, and Hubert Glynne, though shaken a bit, was not seriously injured. The horse, too, was unhurt, but scrambled up and trotted

off some little distance, the reins hanging over his neck. Catching the steed and remounting occupied several minutes, and by that time Varley Fang was out of sight.

Further pursuit was of course utterly useless, so Hubert Glynne, after looking round to discover his whereabouts, commenced to ride slowly. He found that in the pursuit he had made a partial circuit, and was now approaching the eastern part of the city outskirts, whence there led a road straight to his own plantation. When he gained this, Hubert Glynne drew rein, and considered. Varley Fang had escaped from him for the present—that was certain. Evening was approaching, and he could ride on to the plantation in little more time than it would take to pick his way among the narrow, dirty lanes in the suburbs of the city to his own house. He felt the fever fit coming on him again, and quickly made up his mind as to what he would do.

Less than an hour's brisk ride would bring him to the old plantation house, and there he would remain till cured from this illness, which grew hour by hour in severity. He knew that there remained at the plantation house several old and faithful slaves, by one of whom he could send word to his sister or Lola, who, if necessary, would bring a doctor with her. This, he thought, would be a much better plan than riding back through the streets of the city, where all was tumult, confusion, and excitement.

So he turned his horse's head homewards, and rode on at a long, swinging canter. The evening was hot and sultry, and the setting sun played in his face. The attack of fever was more severe than any of the previous ones, and at times he could scarcely see for a mist which gathered before his eyes; nor hear, by reason of a perpetual humming sound which seemed to ring in his ears.

He grew giddy, and several times was obliged to bend low in the saddle and grasp the pommel to prevent himself falling off. Fortunately, the horse knew the road home very well, and required no guiding.

Halting suddenly before the hall door of his once happy home, Hubert Glynne was thrown from the saddle by the jerk, and lay at the now dreary and forlorn threshold of Valverde plantation house.

As he had calculated, it was not untenanted, for more than a score of old negroes and negresses occupied it. There remained yet some able-bodied men, too, in the field-hand huts, who had not yet made up their minds to quit the old place, where food and shelter was certain, for the doubtful advantages of a nominal freedom.

Little or no work was done, it is true; even those who remained, if not absolutely refusing, yet persistently neglecting to do anything. The fact is, they were waiting to see the upshot of events. If the Yankees triumphed at once and completely, of course it was not to be expected they would remain in involuntary servitude.

If, on the other hand, their masters held their ground, they would accept their position, and live on and work on as they had done for years—well fed, well clothed, and, if not happy, at all events with no cares and troubles to distract them.

The noise of the horse trotting up to the door brought a crowd of negroes out, who had been basking by a huge fire they had lit in the kitchen; notwithstanding the day had been a blazing hot one, and the evening was still sultry.

Among them was old Jake, who, recognizing his master as he lay insensible from illness and the shock of the fall, hastened to raise him.

"Oh, my golly! if it ain't Massa Hubert! Hyar, Chloe—hyar, you oder niggers, help me get him up—'specs he's been hurt in de fights."

There was no lack of kindness and sympathy towards their master among those poor slaves, and, in a brief space, Hubert Glynne was carried in-doors and laid on a couch upstairs.

He lay all night, watched over by old Chloe, the negro wench, in raving delirium, which did not abate all night, nor till noon next day. He was incapable of giving any orders; and they, ignorant and helpless, knew not what to do. It happened, however, that the surgeon to a regiment in the field passed the house, and called in for water for himself and horse. He was immediately taken up to see the sick man, whom he found in a burning fever.

There was an amply supplied medicine chest, which, in the hands of the negroes, was utterly useless. The doctor, however, made up draughts enough to last for a week; and, after giving particular instructions as to the administration and the treatment of the sick man, rode to join his regiment, which had left the city under General Snell.

Day after day passed, and still Hubert Glynne lay tossing in delirium, the fever having taken strong hold of his powerful frame.

At the end of the fifth day, however, he grew quieter and less restless, and gradually regained his consciousness in a measure. All the while he had not been sensible enough to send a message to his sister or friends in New Orleans; and the negroes, utterly unaccustomed to act without orders, were too stupid and inert. The thought never struck them; they chattered and laughed, pitied and bemoaned the state of their sick master, but never dreamed of taking the most obvious steps.

At the close of a week, Hubert Glynne rose from his couch, pale and gaunt, with sunken eyes, in which yet burned the smouldering fire of fever. His voice was broken, his movements uncertain, his once firm tread tottering and feeble.

"Get me my horse," he said, in a deep sepulchral voice; "I am well now. It is time I was in the saddle again. Quick, one of you niggers, saddle my horse, and bring him round to the door."

"Massa not well enough—he lie down bit longer."

"No, no: I tell you my country needs my services. The Yankees are thundering at the gates of New Orleans. It behoves every Southern gentleman to buckle on his sword and strike for the glorious Confederacy."

Nothing could alter Hubert Glynne's determination; and though he could scarcely get into the saddle, or keep his balance, he managed to mount, and rode away towards New Orleans.

Not yet recovered, with the fever still clinging to him, he rode on under a blazing sun on a scorching hot day.

The result is not to be wondered at. He reached the city: the fever again seized on him, and he knew not what

he did. Riding with flushed face and gleaming eyes along the Levée, his eye fell on the hated Yankee ensign floating from a flagstaff.

Furious with rage, not recognizing the fact that the Yankees were in full possession, and had been for days, he rode up to the flagstaff, hauled down the hated symbol, and trampled it in the mud. He was surrounded, overpowered, disarmed, and dragged up to the Provost Marshal's.

Thus it happened that Hubert Glynne lay under sentence of death in a guard-house of New Orleans.

CHAPTER LX.

A DREADFUL ALTERNATIVE.

WE left Lola just ushered into the presence of General Butler, governor of New Orleans, near whom stood Varley Fang, the man she most hated, loathed, and feared of all others in the world.

Though she had not expected to have seen him, he was prepared for her coming, and his countenance wore an expression of Satanic triumph which absolutely made her tremble.

She started back instinctively, and for an instant thought of retiring, so utterly was she confounded by the presence of Varley Fang, standing by the right hand of the ruthless despot who now ruled the city.

She quickly regained her courage, however, and remembered the vital importance of her errand.

Possibly, on her successful pleading lay the only hope of safety for Hubert Glynne, who was condemned to an ignominious death on the following day.

So, meeting the triumphant glance of Fang with one of scorn and defiance, she addressed herself to General Butler.

"Sir," she said.

"Young woman," the ex-attorney interrupted, harshly, "when you address an officer of the United States' Govern-

ment, you will be pleased to designate him by the rank he holds in the service."

"General Butler," she said, "for such, I believe, you are—I am no adept either in the ways of courts or camps—I appear before you as a suppliant, and not only as a suppliant, but as one asking for more than mercy."

"For whom have you come to intercede?"

"For a prisoner."

"Ah! a rebel, I suppose?"

"A rebel? yes; but a hero and honourable gentleman——"

"His name?"

"Hubert Glynne."

The General turned to Varley Fang.

"Is not that the name of the man," he asked, "who had the impious audacity to haul down our glorious flag, the Stars and Stripes, and trample it in the dust?"

"It is, General."

"Woman, you are mad!" said Butler, rising, "the scoundrel shall hang to-morrow."

"General Butler, hear me!" she cried, as he impatiently waved his hand.

"I tell you it is useless; what you ask is absurd; he deserves hanging and shall hang, and if I had my will so should every cursed rebel taken in arms against our glorious republic."

"General, hear me! I implore, nay, I demand a hearing!"

She stood now, bold and defiant, with outstretched hands and flashing eyes.

Butler regarded her first with curiosity, then with admiration.

"Upon my soul, young woman, you have the impudence of the devil. A fine, well-grown girl, though. Who are you?"

"That, General, I submit, is nothing to the point."

Varley Fang approached Butler, and whispered in his ear—

"This girl was formerly a slave of Hubert Glynne's, and, I fancy, his concubine."

Butler's eyes gleamed with an expression not easy to read.

Was it anger, or admiration, or passion?

"Oh, oh!" he said, "so that is it, eh, my pretty bird? This Hubert Glynne is your master, and you his girl, his woman—eh? That is why you come here whining for his life. By thunder! it aggravates his offence. Such cursed immorality must be put an end to."

"It is false," cried Lola, flushing crimson from brow to bosom with just indignation—"false, as is that blackhearted scoundrel who whispered the slander in your ear."

"Indeed," said Butler, re-seating himself, and regarding her intently, "you seem a bit of a vixen. Are you loyal to the Union, or are you one of these New Orleans sluts who go about the streets and dare to insult my gallant soldiers?"

"Gallant soldiers!" said Lola, mournfully; "if gallantry means outraging and insulting helpless women and old men, then they are truly gallant indeed. General Butler, during the last few days I have witnessed scenes of violent lawlessness and bloodshed which would disgrace the arms of troops fighting for even a holier cause than yours is."

"A holier cause! Impossible! My brave fellows are fighting for the Union."

"From what I have seen it seems to me that if either they or their officers have ever fought at all it has been with the hope of plunder, and licence to commit with impunity what atrocities they please on a helpless population."

The General smiled angrily. The taunt as to their object being plunder had touched him.

Varley Fang now for the first time spoke aloud.

"Young woman," he said, with that sneering smile so hateful to her, "you are a curious advocate. You come to beg a favour of the General, and you commence by abusing and villifying his soldiers. You come to ask the life of this man—"

"Silence, Varley Fang—traitor, wretch, coward, and liar!" she cried, quite incapable of restraining her fierce indignation; "I ask no favour of you, sneaking renegade—as for aid——"

Fang turned livid with rage at hearing himself thus branded by the girl.

"A pestilent vixen, General," he said. "a rank Rebel, although still a slave."

Still a slave!

The words jarred painfully on her ears, and she noticed that Fang bestowed a glance full of meaning on the General.

It was too true. Her free papers had not yet been signed, and as slavery was not yet abolished, she was the property of Maude Glynne.

"Ah! still a slave. Who is her owner at the present moment?"

"The sister of this man who is to die to-morrow," said Varley Fang; and then he again whispered something to the General. Lola only caught a few words—

"I claim the fulfilment of your promise, General."

And as he spoke, she knew by the glance of his cruel eye that he alluded to her.

"Young woman, you can retire."

"You have given me no answer yet, General," she cried, awakened now to the terrible fact that she was being dismissed without having accomplished anything.

"Call in an hour's time and you shall have your answer."

The tone in which this was spoken apprised her that it was quite hopeless to prolong the discussion then, or press her petition. So she withdrew—slowly and sadly—but cherishing a bitter hatred in her heart against Fang—that fiend in human shape—who appeared when least expected or desired, to encompass her ruin and dash her hopes.

"Now, General," said Fang, briskly and sharply, "I call upon you to fulfil your promise."

"What do you require me to do?"

"That girl is a slave. I wish to own her—wish her to be my slave."

"Slavery is a wicked and abominable institution—and as such——"

"That may be, General, but it is not yet abolished by the laws of the United States."

"How can I give you the girl for a slave? she is not mine."

"No; but she belongs to the sister of this condemned man."

"Weir? I do not see——"

"But the man is——"

"I thought you hated him, and wished him hanged?"

"And so do hate him—a thousand curses on his head!"

"And yet, if I gather your meaning aright, you wish me to spare his life, on condition of the girl being handed over to you?"

Varley Fang looked keenly at Butler, and Butler as sharply on him.

"I don't care whether you spare him, or don't; all I stipulate for is this, that you so work on his sister, Maude Glynne, that she will assign the girl to me, or at least in such a manner that she would ultimately fall into my hands."

"Ah! I begin to see, you want me to promise the condemned man's sister that his life shall be spared, on condition of her selling or assigning her slave, and then hang him afterwards. Upon my soul, Mr. Fang, you are a consummate scoundrel."

"And you, General Benjamin Butler—are an immaculate man—a patriotic man—with no mercenary motives—no desire to aggrandize yourself. Let it be so; you defy me, and refuse to complete your part of the contract entered into between us; I will wager that you are not Governor of New Orleans this day month. Remember what I know as to certain transactions, particularly as to the specie found in the banks."

Butler was not apparently disconcerted, but a close observer might have noticed a dark shade flit over his face.

"By no means, Mr. Fang, you jump too hastily at conclusions. I do not say I refuse. I only ask, what it is you wish me to do?"

"In the first place, then, send for the sister of this man, Hubert Glynne, and tell her that the only condition on which you will spare her brother's life is that she shall assign to you the girl Lola."

"Good; I will do that."

"I will wait in the adjoining cabinet, where, behind the curtains, I can hear what passes."

"With all my heart; send a messenger to this young lady."

Varley Fang went out to do so, but there was a dissatisfied look on his face. He did not know what to make of Butler's ready compliance; there was something in his manner which disquieted him, and led him to fear that all would not go exactly as he wished.

However, his only plan was to wait, and watch the course of events.

CHAPTER LXI.

LOLA RESOLVES ON A TERRIBLE SACRIFICE.

MAUDE GLYNNE'S eyes were red with weeping when, in obedience to the message from the Governor of New Orleans, she came, and was ushered into his presence.

She had not the high spirit and courage of Lola, and at once fell on her knees before Butler, and commenced pouring forth a torrent of impassioned entreaties.

He heard her patiently for some time, and then said, quietly—

"Young lady, if you will rise and listen, I will tell you what I can do, what I will do, and what you must do."

There was but little hope to be gathered from the tone in which he spoke, but she controlled herself, and caught at the words, "What I will do, and what you must do."

He would pardon her brother, but on conditions. Such she gathered was the purport of his speech.

In a very few brief sentences Butler came to the point. He told her that Hubert Glynne was justly doomed to death, and that by sparing him he would be committing little less than a crime against the Union he so dearly loved. Then he went on to say that perhaps he might be induced to extend his clemency, only, however, on the condition of absolute and unquestioning obedience to his behests.

Thereupon she promised, in the name of herself and brother, that she would do whatever he ordered—leave New Orleans, or reside there, as he chose.

"You have several slaves, I believe—male and female?"

"We had: but now," she said, bitterly, "we can scarcely

be said to own anything, except at the mercy of your soldiers."

"That is as it should be. Treason is a crime, and must be punished. But to return to the subject of your slaves. Slavery is an abominable institution, hateful in the sight of God and man. You have one slave in particular, who, for reasons of state, must be given up to me, General Benjamin Butler. There is a plot at work, and it is necessary for the discovery thereof, and the punishment of the traitors, that this slave girl should be absolutely assigned—sold, in fact—to me. Much as I abhor and condemn the institution, in this case my holding a slave for a time is justified by the reasons."

"A slave girl!" Maude faltered, as the truth slowly dawned upon her.

"Yes, she was here an hour or two back, and her name is Lola."

"But she is free—my brother gave her her freedom."

"Not so," was the reply; "she is assigned to you—is your property, and her sale to me is the price of your brother's life."

Maude Glynn wept aloud.

"Oh, Heavens! this is terrible. I cannot—I will not—I know there is some dark plot afoot."

"Know this, then, also, that if my behest is not obeyed, your brother dies to-morrow."

"I will see Lola—I will see her. I cannot—I will not without her consent!" gasped poor Maude.

"Very good," replied Butler, quietly, "do as you please. Let me have an answer within two hours. After that time has elapsed it will be *too late!*"

"May I see my brother?"

"No. In two hours I shall expect your answer. Leave me now. I have other business to attend to of more importance than the life or death of a pestilent rebel like your brother."

"It is that miscreant, Varley Fang, who has devised this fresh torture," cried Lola, with passionate indignation. "I heard a few of his whispered words to the General—

the deep-dyed, black-hearted traitor. He would accomplish by his cunning what he failed by force. It is *he* who is long aiming for me, Miss Maude; it is he who makes me the price of your brother's life. He would have me for ~~his~~ slave and—oh, degradation most loathsome—his mistress. But it shall never be. I swear by Heaven it shall not be. I will die ten thousand deaths rather than be in that man's power."

"Alas! my unhappy brother," said Maude Glynne; "there is, then, no hope."

"Yes, there is hope," Lola exclaimed passionately. "I will and can save him."

"But how, Lola? It is impossible. You are the price the tyrant demands."

"And you shall accept his terms—assign me—sell me—do with your poor slave what you will—your brother shall be saved."

"She spoke hysterically, her bosom heaving, her whole frame convulsed. And yet she could not weep. The solace of tears was denied her.

"Lola, Lola!" cried Maude Glynne, throwing herself in her arms, "you cannot mean what you say?"

"But I do. I will save him."

"You cannot wish me to sell you to this dreadful Yankee General."

"Yes, yes, I do; you shall, you must. First, however, I will see him—await me here."

Lola was now full of fire and animation. She had made up her mind, and nothing could turn her from her purpose.

Maude Glynne little dreamed of the sacrifice the girl was prepared to make—no other than of her own life. She would purchase the release of the unhappy prisoner by resigning herself to her fate as the slave of Varley Fang, whom she felt assured she would be handed over to by an arrangement with Butler. But his triumph should be short-lived; she would slay him without mercy if she had the opportunity. If not, she would at least put an end to her own existence.

Behold Lola, then, once more in the presence of General Butler. He had expected that Maude Glynne would have waited on him with the answer he demanded, but was by

no means displeased when the slave entered, in all the pride and splendour of her beauty. Lola even looked handsomer than ever—her features radiant with joy at the thought of the sacrifice she was about to make on behalf of him she loved; her eyes blazing with excitement, her supple form erect, her step fearless, her every action full of grace and beauty.

The General regarded her with complacent admiration.

"Ha, ha, ha! Fang," he said to himself, "a cunning rascal you think yourself, no doubt; but, with all your cunning, you shall not have possession of this most queenly beauty. No, no; I am governor of New Orleans, and it's strange if I don't have my way in this affair."

"Well, young woman—what is it?" he asked, with affected carelessness.

"I have come, General, to bring you the answer of Miss Maude Glynne, whose property I am."

"Good! what is it?"

"She consents!"

"And you, my sweet beauty, are you willing to be transferred to me?"

"I am," was the curt reply; "but on certain conditions."

"Conditions, eh?" and Butler frowned darkly at the word.

"They are not hard ones," Lola went on, hastily, "but they are the only ones to which Maude Glynne and I will consent. I ask—or rather she asks for me—one week of liberty."

"But the prisoner is to die to-morrow."

"You must respite him for a week."

Butler thought for a moment, and then asked suspiciously,

"And at the end of that time you will come with your mistress, who will assign you to me?"

"I will."

That was all she said, but he *knew* that she spoke the truth.

"There can be no great harm in granting the respite for a week," he said to himself. "I will take care Mr. Varley Fang does not outwit me. He is a clever scoundrel, but I flatter myself I am his match. I have not been brought up to the law to no purpose."

"Very well, then, young woman; I will respite the prisoner for a week. If you fail to fulfil your part of the bargain—or rather, if you and your mistress do not both concur in doing as agreed, then at eight o'clock in the morning, to-morrow week, Hubert Glynne shall be hanged in the court-yard of the prison."

"And if we keep our word?"

"He shall go free."

"You will release him?"

"I will sign an order for his release."

"One more request—condition rather, I should say."

"Well?"

"I wish permission to see him; once to-night, and again on the last night of all—the night on which my owner, his sister, will assign me to you."

"Yes; I will grant both those requests."

"Write me the necessary orders."

He did so.

"Permit the bearer of this, a woman, Lola by name, to visit the prisoner condemned to be hanged, and now in your charge, twice; once to-night, again on this night week. Interview not longer than half-an-hour."

"BENJAMIN BUTLER,

"Governor of New Orleans."

This order he addressed to the officer in command of the prison, and handed to her. Then he took another sheet of paper, and wrote a respite for one week from that date.

"Here is the respite—take it yourself, and then you will be satisfied."

The girl hurried away without another word.

Butler's face lighted up with satisfaction.

"By thunder, she's a splendid girl—never saw a handsomer!"

"If Mr. Fang ever owns her, my name's not General Butler. I think I have her, and treated her aright. She has got some absurd Christian notions in her head, and because she loves this mad rebel thinks herself bound to save him. And she'll keep her word, that girl. She'll be here punctual to time."

When Fang heard of the arrangement he was very wroth.

But he was powerless, so submitted with the best grace possible.

Only when he was informed of the order which Lola had received to visit the prison, he also asked for permission to visit him when he pleased.

"What is your object?"

"To guard against his escape—that girl will move heaven and earth, risk anything, to contrive his escape without the necessity of surrendering herself."

"Ha! there is something in that; but it scarce seems possible."

"It is best to be safe. There are hundreds, aye thousands, of rebels lying concealed in the city. I know that I am frequently watched, and suspect that even among those we suppose loyal to the Union, there are many well affected to the rebels."

"Are there any of that secret society you belonged to in other places?"

Varley Fang started at the question.

"Why do you ask? I trust not; if there are they should be hunted out and shot—my life is not safe."

"I heard to-day from some of my spies that there are at least fifty lurking about the city."

"They must be arrested, and shot at once—at once," Fang said, seriously.

"Certainly, at once; but first they have to be caught. Go you and see if you can glean any information. Trust me, if you catch them I will have them executed sharply enough."

Butler laughed as if it was an excellent joke, and when Fang had gone out, he laughed again, and yet more grimly. Then he took pen and paper and wrote an order, addressed to the Provost Marshal. It was to the effect that a sharp eye should be kept on Varley Fang, in order that he might be arrested at any moment.

"If he attempts any tricks with me, I'll cut him short; and as to any unpleasant revelations he may make, a drum-head court-martial won't give him much time."

Furthermore, Butler wrote an order to the governor of

the prison, to the effect that Fang should be permitted access to the prisoner.

"This will keep him quiet; he will not imagine that I have any intentions contrary to his plans. One thing I am determined on, the girl shall first be mine. If he takes it quietly, well and good; if not, I'll hang him. He's got documents on his person quite sufficient to justify me in doing so, and there would be no difficulty in getting a drum-head court-martial to find him guilty."

It will be seen by this that Varley Fang's path was not exactly one of roses.

He had some slight suspicion that he was not quite safe, but dreamed not of the pit which yawned to receive him.

When Lola visited Hubert Glynne, immediately after receiving the order to do so, she found him still labouring under fever.

But the worst symptoms had subsided, and though at first he scarcely knew her, he soon became more collected and could talk rationally.

He knew right well that his execution had been fixed for the following day, and though weak and ill in body he was strong in mind, and determined that he would show the accursed Yankees "how a Southern gentleman could die."

When she told him that they had procured a respite for a week, he sighed.

"Alas, Lola," he said, "I thank you for your kindness, but it is of no avail. I know that I shall be executed; they will never forgive my madness in trampling their flag in the mud. It was a foolish act, and, but for the raging fever which seemed to set my brain on fire, I should never have committed it; as it is I must pay the penalty. There is only one thing which grieves me, and that is that I am to be hung—to die a disgraceful death. I have petitioned to be shot as a man."

"Do not talk so, dear master. We will save you—we mean to save you. You have many friends without. If we can but bribe some of the guards, so as to get you outside these walls, all will be well."

A faint spark of hope arose in his heart at these words. It is human nature never entirely to give up hope, and for a moment or two he brightened at the thought. But there

now followed a re-action, and as he discussed the chance of an escape with her, he came to the conclusion that it was all but impossible.

"But at the last," she said, wishing to cheer him before leaving, "there is one resource; we have one certain means of saving you."

It required much pressing to elicit from her what this last resource was. But Hubert Glynn would not be denied—he would insist on knowing all.

"By heavens!" he cried, when he realized the whole truth—the tremendous sacrifice she was willing to make for his sake—"it shall not be. I will not have it. No, no—a thousand times, no. If you can compass my escape in any other way, do so. But I will not accept life upon such terms as you propose. Do not talk of it, Lola, you make my brain dizzy. I feel quite hot and feverish again."

So, to quiet him, she affected to dismiss the idea, and declared that they could effect his liberation by other means.

Nor was this without foundation.

As Lola had said, the prisoner had many friends without, most of them, it is true, lying hidden in the city, not daring to be seen; but nevertheless, willing to hazard a desperate attempt to procure his liberation.

Lola bade him adieu by promising that no effort should be spared, cheering him by enumerating the chances in favour of success.

At all events she would see him, as permitted in the order, on the night in which the respite expired.

Till then she bade him keep up his heart and rest assured that, come what might, he should be saved from the fate which to him seemed inevitable.

He smiled faintly, and, as she bade him adieu, gratefully kissed her hand.

She trembled all over as his feverish lips touched her fingers, and not trusting her voice to speak, hurried away.

How she fulfilled her mission, it shall be our task to relate.

CHAPTER LXII.

THE YANKEES IN NEW ORLEANS.

NEW ORLEANS was in the possession of the Yankees. A Yankee general was governor of the ancient city; a Yankee army was billeted on the unwilling people; and a Yankee fleet rode triumphant in the river.

But the inhabitants — all those who remained — were heart and soul for the Confederacy; rebels to the backbone.

Hence it is not to be wondered at that there was a constant system of communication with the Confederate forces and friends in the country round about. The Federals held New Orleans; but beyond the city itself, and that space covered by the range of their guns, they had no footing.

Notwithstanding the utmost strictness and the most elaborate precaution, the conquerors were unable to prevent a constant influx and going out of rebels and rebel sympathisers.

Of the population remaining in the city, ninety-nine hundredths were bitter Secessionists, and despite of harsh measures, threats, and military terrorism, the Yankees were constantly made aware of the fact that they were thoroughly hated; and, what was more galling, despised. The country above and below the city was in the possession of the Confederates, except when raids were made by the Federal host.

Some of the plantation houses in the immediate vicinity were plundered and burned, and much valuable property destroyed.

The Federal forces held a city in the midst of a hostile country, the whole population of which bitterly hated them.

They were conquerors, it is true, but only of the ground on which they stood. The town swarmed with rebel spies — even the women, old men, and children conspired against the hated invaders, and altogether the Yankee tenure of New Orleans, though secured by reason of the fleet in the river, was most hateful and mortifying to the troops. The

radiés of the city, when they met Federal officers, moved from the pavement into the road, drawing their skirts on one side contemptuously, lest they should be contaminated by the hateful contact with a Yankee uniform.

Hence the notorious, and all-time infamous, proclamation of Benjamin Butler, the Yankee money-grubbing attorney, who, by sham patriotism, had contrived to obtain the post of governor of New Orleans—a proclamation which not only branded this man as the bully and coward he undoubtedly was, but reflected dishonour on the great and powerful nation whose government he disgraced.

Marshal Haynau has found defenders, Emperor Nero an apologist, who seeks to prove that he *only* murdered his mother, and did *not* fiddle while Rome was burning.

Judas Iscariot and Benjamin Butler may one day find champions also.

By the way, an apology is due to the former for mentioning him in the same sentence with the New England attorney. At least, if Judas carried the bag and misapplied the proceeds, he had the grace to spare the hangman his office.

* * * * *

The most vigorous, desperate, and to those concerned, dangerous efforts, were made to compass the release of Hubert Glynn, lying under sentence of death.

Captain George, at the hourly risk of being discovered and shot as a spy, remained in New Orleans, and daily saw Maude Glynn. There were other friends, too, of the condemned, whom the danger could not daunt.

Last, though not least, there was the secret society of the Fiery Cross.

A few members lay concealed in the city, but at the ruins of a barn, wantonly set fire to by a Yankee marauding party, and one-time filled with cotton grown by Hubert Glynn and his brothers, there nightly mustered a goodly company. Captain George rode out from New Orleans every evening, and returned ere day breaking, taking and bringing back the news.

The disguise he affected was that of a Yankee naval officer. He obtained possession of the pass-word each night by means of heavy bribes to a certain Yankee official and

though in hourly peril, faltered not in the task he had undertaken. He had solemnly promised Maude Glynne that her brother should be saved from his threatened doom, and made up his mind to redeem his word, even though he perished in the attempt.

Three days before the time granted by Butler for the carrying out of the sentence, there came a letter from Stanton Glynne.

At another time it would have brought satisfaction to our friends; but, as affairs were, there could be no triumph over a petty success.

Stanton Glynne had seized, by stratagem, a swift screw steamer which lay in Norfolk harbour, and having successfully put to sea with her and escaped, had brought her to the entrance of Lake Pontchartrain ere he was advised of the capture of the city.

The vessel had been re-christened the Fiery Cross, and under that title he proposed to launch her on the seas, a scourge to the enemy's commerce. This news brought no comfort now. The thoughts of Maude Glynne, of Lola, of Captain George, of all immediate friends, were of Hubert Glynne, and the means by which he might be saved.

Lola declared that, at the last, she would rescue him from the fate with which he was threatened.

But Maude Glynne, though loving her brother, refused the sacrifice. She said, nobly, that Hubert would not accept life on such conditions; and she his, sister, would not hand over Lola to the tender mercies of Butler and Fang, unless Hubert expressly desired and ordered that she should do so.

Lola said little, though she determined that, let the worst come to the worst, she would save him at the sacrifice of herself, should all else fail.

CHAPTER LXIII.

THE PLAN OF ESCAPE.

A PLAN WAS matured for the rescue of the condemned prisoner, which, though a desperate one and full of danger

and difficulty, yet gave a good prospect of success. The chance lay in its very audacity.

The prison where Hubert Glynne was confined opened on a large quadrangle, three sides of which were bounded by buildings, the fourth by a high wall. In the centre of this wall was the guard-house, and gate leading to the prison. Two companies of a Yankee regiment, numbering ninety men, were on duty in and about the prison. The grated cells of the prisoners looked out on the quadrangle, where a sentry constantly patrolled.

The window of Hubert Glynne's cell was at a height of about eight feet only from the ground—so that, supposing the bars removed, he could easily leap down.

But to what advantage? it will be asked.

There is but one way of egress, and that through the guard-room, where are the Yankee soldiers.

And the sentry, too. The quadrangle is small, and it would be impossible for any prisoner to get out from his window, even if there were no bars, without being seen, and of course fired on.

But the friends of Hubert Glynne had devised a plan which they thought promised success. The regiment, part of which was stationed to keep guard over the prison, was the 4th Marine Volunteers.

In this New England corps there were many Irishmen, attracted there, some by the high bounty, others, perhaps, by a pure love of fighting.

Darby Kelly was a full private, having enlisted immediately after the capture of the city by the Yankees.

Jupiter, the big nigger, would have done so likewise, but though the Yankees were ostensibly fighting for the freedom of the slave, practically the unhappy black was nowhere permitted to share honour, profit, ease, or glory with them.

There were many of Darby Kelly's compatriots in this said regiment. Few of them cared a bit about the cause for which they had been enlisted to fight, and many were amenable to the persuasions of Darby Kelly's logic—Bourbon whisky, and real gold dollars. On the night of the proposed escape, Darby Kelly would be on duty in the quadrangle.

He would be relieved by another sentry in due course.

The bars having been severed by file and sulphuric acid, at an appointed time Hubert Glynne was to escape from his window, assume the coat, *kepi*, musket, and accoutrements of the Irishman, and when the relief came, quietly walk out through the guard-room.

Should he be discovered, a desperate attempt would be made to liberate him by force.

A body of at least a hundred of his staunchest friends would be loitering about in the neighbourhood, and at a given signal would make a rush, break through the guard-room, carry him off, and then make the best they could of it.

Should it happen, however, as was hoped, that he would be allowed to walk out unmolested, then all would be simple enough.

The Irishman would have provided another coat and cap, and at a fitting opportunity would also seek safety in making a disappearance, before that of the prisoner should be discovered.

Neither pains, expense, nor danger did Captain George spare in elaborating this plan of escape. The day was fixed, the very hour, and enough of the company to which Darby belonged bought over to make it seem almost a certainty.

The prisoner was duly apprised of the scheme for his liberation, and, having nearly recovered from the fever, eagerly entered into it. Life is dear to all—and Hubert Glynne thought if he must die, it would be far preferable to fall fighting than to be strung up by the neck like a dog.

The time fixed was a few minutes before midnight, on the night preceding the last one of all.

Darby Kelly was to apprise the prisoner when the time had come. The bars, previously half filed through, were to be broken, Hubert Glynne to leap forth, and in five minutes be astride of a good steed, surrounded by friends.

This was the programme.

CHAPTER LXIV

THE EVENTFUL NIGHT.

HUBERT GLYNNE, in the dismal solitude of his condemned cell, awaited with desperate anxiety the eventful hour which should see him a free man or end his life, for he had sworn not to be taken alive.

The night came.

Ten o'clock.

Eleven o'clock !

Hitherto he had remained seated on the edge of his bed, sternly steeling himself, and refusing to look from the window, lest an unfriendly eye should perceive him, and all be frustrated.

It was strictly forbidden to stand at the window, to look out, or to attempt to hold converse with the sentry on duty, whose orders were to shoot any prisoner thus contravening the regulations of the prison.

Time passed on.

Hubert Glynne heard half-past eleven chime, and then he could no longer restrain himself.

He went to the window, and taking the small lantern, with which every prisoner's cell was provided, in his hand, gave the appointed signal—a bar of the rebel song, “My Maryland,” whistled very softly.

The sentry halted.

“Stand back dah, or I shoot.”

A strange voice—the voice of a negro !

What did it mean.

At first he knew not, but ere long he realized the truth. The white men had been ordered elsewhere, and now the prison was guarded by two companies of a negro regiment.

Hubert Glynne stood back as ordered, and despair fell on his soul.

He had counted so confidently on at least having a fight for his life and liberty.

And now, all was over.

He seated himself, and buried his face in his hands.

he started up, and rushing to the window, shouted, "Shoot, you black scoundrel, shoot; I defy you!"

But instead of firing at him, as he would have been justified in doing, according to orders, the sentry called the corporal of the guard, who, in turn, called the officer on duty.

"What's the good of giving orders, you black cuss," the lieutenant on duty said; "why didn't you shoot the d——d rebel directly he showed himself at the window? Who is the next sentry?"

"I, Sebastian Velasco."

CHAPTER LXV.

THE SENTINEL.

HUBERT GLYNNE heard the words, and recognized the voice as that of Lola's brother.

"So," he said to himself in the bitterness of his heart, "this is my reward for saving the life of this yellow-skinned scum. He is sentry over me, and if I dare show myself at the window will shoot me."

Presently all was silent again. He heard the monotonous tramp of the sentry as he marched round the stone-paved quadrangle.

"And I am doomed to die like a dog—to be strangled in the sight of these jackal hounds! No, by heavens! I will obviate this. The sentry has been rebuked for not firing—this one will gladly slay me."

Hubert Glynn ran to the window, and taking the lantern in one hand, commenced shaking the bars with the other.

"Shoot, sentry, shoot! I am going to escape. Shoot, you black cur—fire, and show your gratitude. Shoot, Sebastian. Why don't you shoot?"

At his first words the sentry's piece came to his shoulder.

Yet the man hesitated.

He heard the voice, and when he heard himself called by name, lowered his rifle and walked up to the window.

"Now," said Hubert, tauntingly, "why don't you shoot? You've got your hated master in your power. Why don't you kill him?"

Sebastian made no reply, but quietly approached close to the window and handed up his rifle.

"You ask me why I do not shoot? I reply, because you have saved my life; and, tyrant as you are, you shall not die by my hand. Take the rifle—shoot me. I fear not death. Escape then, if you can, and believe that even a slave is capable of gratitude."

For a moment Hubert clutched the rifle, and felt a fierce joy at the knowledge that he was armed.

But quickly he became aware that it availed him not.

He might shoot the sentry, and burst through the bars, already half filed through, but he could not pass the gate. It was impossible.

Gloomily he resigned himself to his fate.

"Take back your rifle," he said, hoarsely, "it is useless to me."

He handed it out, and it fell with a crash on the stone pavement.

"Hubert Glynne, if I can save you I will."

"Boy, it is impossible; but I thank you for the offer."

"I will forfeit my own life to set you free."

"It is impossible. You would lose your life in vain. When I am dead, executed—hanged shamefully—think of me sometimes and do not curse me. I may have been a hard master perhaps—cruel and unjust. It cannot be helped now. I am doomed."

"Is there nothing I can do?"

"Yes, one thing only," cried Hubert.

"What is it?"

"Will you swear to do as I tell you?"

"I will."

"Then shoot me through the heart, so that I may escape the ignominious death I am sentenced to!"

"I cannot do it."

"I adjure you, if you have any gratitude in your nature, to do as I ask you."

"I cannot—I dare not shed your blood."

"Ungrateful dog!" cried Hubert Glynne, angrily, "you wish to gloat over the spectacle of my execution. Hound of a slave! Yellow-skinned cur! fit only to be kicked by a white man, I spit upon you!"

Sebastian shook with passion, and instinctively he raised his rifle to his shoulder. Then he let it drop again.

"Hubert Glynne, you have insulted me. I said I would never shed your blood; I will prove myself a liar. More, I would never injure you or yours; I will perjure myself, and all for the bitter insult you have now put on me."

"Good, good, brave and magnanimous nigger—shoot!"

As he spoke Hubert Glynne came right up to the bars, and held the lantern above his head.

"Shoot, I say; shoot, you yellow cur!"

"No; not now."

"Not now?"

"No."

"What do you mean?"

"To-morrow night I am on sentry, and shall be relieved at twelve o'clock. Eight hours after that time you will be executed."

"Well!"

"You are obtuse, more stupid than a d——d nigger like myself," said Sebastian, bitterly. "Do you want me to say plainly what I mean?"

"Yes."

"When the prison clock strikes twelve to-morrow night I shall direct my attention to the window of your cell. If you appear there with the lantern in your hand, I will do my duty—carry out my orders."

"You will shoot me?"

"I will, so help me God! I will take a good and steady aim, and if your heart fail you not, at the last stroke of the clock, I will send a bullet through your breast."

"You mean it?"

"I mean it!"

"Sebastian, I honour you. If I could reach you. I would grasp your hand. Remember!"

"I will!"

CHAPTER LXVI

THE LAST NIGHT.

HUBERT GLYNNE waited with a sort of feverish joy for this the last night.

He knew that the mulatto would keep his word if it were possible; but feared lest another change like that which dashed his hopes of life and freedom might again occur.

Ten o'clock!

Furtively looking from his grated window, he saw the sentry relieved.

It was Sebastian.

His heart bounded with a fierce joy.

He would rob the Yankees of their triumph, and die the death of a soldier, with a bullet through his heart.

He had asked for pen, ink, and paper, and, this being his last night, his request had been granted.

He wrote first a letter to his sister Maude—a bold, defiant letter—bade her be of good heart, and prove as good a patriot as she had been a sister.

Another letter he wrote to Captain George, who he well knew had been moving heaven and earth, leaving no stone unturned, putting his own life in imminent peril to compass his release.

He wrote a last letter to each of his brothers.

A defiant letter also, addressed to Beast Butler of New Orleans.

And, last of all, he wrote a letter to Lola.

That was the hardest task of all.

He had heard from her of the terms proposed by Butler and Varley Fang as the price of his life, and had absolutely refused.

So far as Lola was concerned, his refusal would have had no weight.

She would have saved him in spite of himself.

But he had communicated with his sister Maude through Captain George, and he knew well enough that his friend would keep his word.

He said simply and solemnly, that if he were released at such a price, against his will, he would immediately go and repeat the offence for which he was now lying under sentence of death.

And those who knew him were sure he would keep his word.

Lola, however, did not quite despair.

She resolved to visit him on the last night, as agreed on with General Benjamin Butler.

CHAPTER LXVII.

THE MIDNIGHT HOUR.

THE condemned prisoner sitting in moody solitude in his cell is aroused shortly after eleven o'clock by the opening of the door.

"A visitor—one hour."

Such are the words of the official who ushers Lola into his presence on this his last night.

She fell on her knees at once, and implored him to accept life at the sacrifice of herself.

"It is useless, Lola; you know me well enough to believe my word, I hope."

"But, dear Hubert," (she had never called him so before), "if you have no fear, no care for yourself, at least think of your family—remember Miss Maude; let it not be thrown in her teeth that her brother died an ignominious death—was hanged."

"I shall not die an ignominious death—I shall not be hanged."

"What mean you? In eight hours from this time you will be led out to execution."

She was still on her knees, and now he gently raised her up.

"No, Lola—dear Lola I will call you now, since I have only about half an hour to live."

"Half an hour! They have not altered the time?"

"No."

"Explain."

"I will; but not now."

"When?"

"When it wants five minutes of midnight I will tell you all."

He could not tell her that at the last stroke of twelve he was to die, and by her brother's hand.

* * * * *

The time passed. She spent it in vain prayers that he would have mercy on herself and his sister, and accept the sacrifice she proposed.

It was all in vain.

And now the hour approaches.

"Lola," he said, rising, as he thought it must be near midnight.

She threw herself weeping on the rude palliasse, while he carefully trimmed the wick of the lantern.

"Now, I will tell you," he said, "how I shall escape any ignominious death by hanging. At the first stroke of twelve I shall take the lantern, and stand up to the window. At the last stroke I shall be shot through the heart."

Then he proceeded to tell her of the compact he had made with the sentry.

But he did not reveal his name; did not let her imagine that it was her own brother who was to fire the fatal shot. She ceased weeping all at once.

"You refuse to accept life from me. Let it be so. I will die too."

He smiled sadly on her.

"Nonsense, Lola; you are young and beautiful. Some dashing Yankee officer will take a fancy to you and marry you."

"Never, never!" she cried, passionately. "I begin to hate the Yankees now."

"Lola, it is close on twelve, you had better leave me."

"No! no!" she almost shrieked, "I will not leave you."

"You wish to see me hanged?"

"No," she moaned.

"Then I conjure you to be a woman. *If you have ever loved me, arise*

Thereupon she rose. She could not refuse to answer to that appeal.

The door was again thrown open; the gaoler entered.

"Another visitor for the prisoner."

Varley Fang appeared.

Hubert glanced disdainfully at him, and asked—

"Your business, sir?"

"I am here by authority."

"Scoundrel—wretch—thief—assassin!" shrieked Lola.

"Young woman, your violence will not save your lover; never fear."

The clock struck the first chime of twelve.

Lola started up and dragged Hubert from the window, to which he had immediately advanced, lantern in hand. Fire flashed from her dark eyes—her cheek was flushed—her bosom heaved—her breath came quick in short gasps. She was inspired with the hope of saving her lover.

She saw that Varley Fang carried a great bunch of keys.

The clock chimed on.

Hubert Glynne thought she was mad, so strangely did she act.

"Pooh, pooh," she cried, "you are outwitted. He shall escape; look forth into the yard!"

One!

Two!

Three!

Four!

The clock had already chimed four when she spoke.

Five!

Six!

Seven!

Eight!

"I tell you that you are baffled. The prison bars are filed through!"

"Ha!"

That aroused him, and snatching the lantern, he went to the window and commenced an examination.

"Treachery, by heaven! You jade, you shall suffer for this."

Meanwhile the clock chimed on.

Nine !

Ten !

Eleven !

He was still standing, holding the lantern above his head, and looking at the bars and out into the quadrangle.

"Sentry !" he shouted.

But ere he could say more the clock chimed the twelfth stroke.

Bang !

Thud !

A bullet plunged through his chest, and with a cry of pain he fell.

"Quick ! now is your opportunity !" Lola cried.

In a moment she dragged from the dying villain cloak, hat, and keys.

In less than a minute after the midnight hour had chimed Hubert Glynn quietly walked out of the prison.

Captain George was waiting on horseback for Lola without.

To spring into the saddle and gallop away from that locality was not the work of a minute.

Hubert was free, and speedily used his freedom to good purpose.

Accompanied by Captain George and other friends who had lingered to the last—hoping against hope—he made the best of his way to a rendezvous on the banks of Lake Pontchartrain, where lay moored the rebel privateer, christened by Stanton Glynn the "Fiery Cross."

But of the cruise of this scourge of the ocean there is no space to relate here.

Nor of the further adventures of the beautiful ex-slave Lola, who defeated the machinations of her enemies, and by the gift of Maude Glynn became a free woman.

Whatever may betide, it is not likely that either Hubert Glynn or she who gave the timely warning, will ever forget the midnight signal on the hill—the blazing beacon of revolt—THE FIERY CROSS.

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